DAMON RUNYON

Take it Easy

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Take It Easy

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Tight Shoes

All this begins the day a young character by the name of Rupert Salsinger sells Hymie Minsk, the horse player, a pair of shoes that are too tight.

This Rupert Salsinger works in Bilby's shoe store on Broadway, near Mindy's restaurant, and Hymie stops in there on his way to the Belmont race track early one afternoon, and buys the shoes.

Now Hymie is in pretty much of a hurry, as he knows of a right good thing in the first race at Belmont, so he tells Rupert Salsinger to kindly get out a pair of shoes, size 8½D, and make haste about it.

Well, Rupert Salsinger takes one look at Hymie's dogs, and he can see that Hymie can no more wear an 8½D than he can fly, for Hymie has large, flat Bronx feet that can cover as much ground as there is between second and third when Hymie is just standing still.

So Rupert Salsinger gets out a measuring gadget, and puts one of Hymie's feet in it, and tells Hymie that what he really needs is a 10½EE, but Hymie immediately becomes very indignant, as he is extremely sensitive about the size of his feet, and he says he knows what size shoes he wears, and if

Rupert Salsinger does not care to give him what he wants, he will take his custom elsewhere.

Now if old man Bilby is personally present, he will know enough to give Hymie his usual 10½EE's, and tell him they are 8½D's and Hymie will go on about his business, and think nothing more of it, but Rupert Salsinger is new to Bilby's store, and furthermore he is a very honest and conscientious young character, and does not believe in skullduggery even about a pair of shoes, so he outs with some 8½D's and shows Hymie the mark in them, and Hymie puts them on, and says they are just the right size, and away he goes to the race track.

Well, the good thing in the first race blows, and right away Hymie commences to notice that his shoes seem full of feet, for there is nothing like a loser in the first race for making a guy notice his feet. Then Hymie gets five more losers in a row, so by the time the races are over his feet are almost killing him.

In fact, anybody will tell you that six losers in a row will make a guy's feet hurt, even if he is barefooted, so a pair of tight shoes on such an occasion is practically murder in the first degree. Hymie has to take his shoes off in the train going back to New York to rest his feet, and one and all are most sympathetic with him, because they realize how keenly he must be suffering between the tight shoes and the six losers, and especially the six losers.

Well, Hymie Minsk goes right up to Bilby's shoe store in the tight shoes, and what does he do but use these shoes to kick Rupert Salsinger in the pants all the way from Bilby's store to Fifty-third Street, three blocks away, and the chances are he will be kicking Rupert Salsinger to this very day, if one foot does not finally connect with a book by Karl Marx, which Rupert is wearing in his hip pocket, and which almost breaks Hymie's big toe, it being a very solid book.

But everybody agrees that Hymie does the right thing, especially when Hymie explains that the shoes hurt his feet so at the track that he does not really know what he is doing after the first race, and his pain causes him to bet on horses that he has no right to consider in any manner, shape or form whatever. In fact, everybody agrees that Rupert is a very dangerous character to have on Broadway, as he may take to selling tight shoes to horse players generally, and thus cause untold suffering among them, besides upsetting their figures on the horse races.

Furthermore, when Rupert Salsinger gets back to the shoe store old man Bilby pays him off and fires him, and also personally takes a few kicks at Rupert Salsinger's pants himself as Rupert is going out the door, and old man Bilby's aim is much better than Hymie's, and he does not hit the volume of Karl Marx even once.

So there Rupert Salsinger is without a position, and with only half a week's wages consisting of about seven slugs in his pocket, and as it is the first position Rupert has since the depression sets in, he is downcast no little, especially as he is

hoping to save enough money in this position to justify him in asking Miss Minnie Schultz, who lives over on Tenth Avenue, to be his bride.

He is in love with Miss Minnie Schultz for several years, and expects to one day ask her to marry him, but Rupert Salsinger is such a conscientious young character that he will never think of making such a request until he becomes a provider, and anyway, Miss Minnie Schultz's papa, who keeps a delicatessen store, by no means approves of Rupert Salsinger, because Rupert is always so thoughtful and studious, and also always so much out of a position.

In fact, Miss Minnie Schultz's papa considers Rupert nothing but a bum, and he wishes his daughter to marry an entirely different character by the name of Gus Schmelk, who runs a delicatessen store right across the street from the Schultz store, and is giving Miss Minnie Schultz's papa such tough competition that her papa figures it will be a nice business deal for her to marry Gus Schmelk and combine the stores.

But Miss Minnie Schultz is rather fond of Rupert Salsinger, as he is tall and thin, and has thick black hair, and a very serious expression, and wears spectacles, and is really much better than a raw hand when it comes to making love, even though he is so conservative about speaking of marriage.

Well, anyway, Rupert Salsinger goes up Broadway feeling very sad and blue, and finally he stops in the Bridle Grill, and steps up to the bar and calls for a glass of beer, and while

he is drinking this beer, he gets to thinking what a cruel world it is to be sure, so he calls for another beer, with a little rye whisky on the side, for while Rupert Salsinger is by no means a rum-dum, he feels that this is an occasion that calls for a few drams, anyway.

It is now along about eight bells in the evening, and not many cash customers are in the Bridle Grill, when all of a sudden in comes a tall, good-looking young fellow in evening clothes, including a high hat, and an opera cape, lined with white silk, and who is this young fellow but Calvin Colby, who is known far and wide as a great pain in the neck to his loving parents.

He is also known as a character who likes to get around and, in fact, Calvin Colby's only occupation is getting around. His people are as rich as mud, and to tell the truth, richer, and what is more they are in the Social Register and, in fact, Calvin Colby is in the Social Register himself until the publishers come upon his name one day and see that it is a typographical error.

He is often in the newspapers, because it is really remarkable how Calvin Colby's automobiles can spill dolls up against telegraph poles along the Boston Post Road, when he happens to strike these obstacles, and the dolls are always suing Calvin Colby for breaking their legs, or spoiling their complexions. It finally gets so there is talk of taking Calvin's driving licence away from him before he shatters all the telegraph poles along the Boston Post Road.

He is without doubt strictly a Hoorah Henry, and he is generally figured as nothing but a lob as far as ever doing anything useful in this world is concerned, although everybody admits that he has a nice disposition, and is as good a right guard as ever comes out of Yale.

Calvin Colby is undoubtedly slightly mulled when he enters the Bridle Grill, and he steps up to the bar alongside Rupert Salsinger, and calls for an old-fashioned cocktail, and after he inhales this, he calls for three more of the same, one right after the other, and about this time, Rupert Salsinger, who is standing there thinking of the wrongs he suffers at the feet of Hymie Minsk and old man Bilby, lets out a terrible sigh, as follows:

'Hah-ah-ah-hah.'

Well, at this, Calvin Colby gazes at Rupert Salsinger in surprise, as Rupert's sigh sounds very much like wind escaping from a punctured tyre, and Calvin speaks to Rupert like this:

'What is eating you?' Calvin says. 'Have a drink,' he says.

Naturally, Rupert has a drink, because it is very seldom in his life that he gets a drink for nothing, and this time he calls for an old-fashioned, too, as he is tired of beer and rye whisky, and moreover he figures it will be polite to drink the same as his host, and then he says to Calvin Colby:

'Comrade,' he says, 'this is an awful world. There is no justice.'

'Well,' Calvin Colby says, 'I never give the matter much thought, because personally I never have any occasion for justice. But,' he says, 'you may be right. Have a drink.'

So they have this second drink, and also quite a few other drinks, and presently they are as friendly as a new bride and groom, and Rupert Salsinger tells Calvin Colby about the shoes, and Hymie Minsk, and old man Bilby, and also about Miss Minnie Schultz, and when he gets to Miss Minnie Schultz, he sheds tears all over Calvin Colby's white pique vest.

Well, Calvin Colby is practically petrified with horror to think of what Rupert Salsinger suffers, although he does not consider Rupert's tears over Miss Minnie Schultz quite manly, as Calvin Colby personally never experiences love, and regards dolls as only plaintiffs, but he admits that his soul seethes with indignation at the idea of Miss Minnie Schultz's papa wishing to force her into a marriage with Gus Schmelk. In fact, Calvin Colby says that while he does not know this Gus Schmelk he is willing to make a little wager that he is nothing but a bounder and a cad.

Now it seems that Calvin Colby is all dressed up to go somewhere, but by this time he cannot remember where, and he suggests to Rupert Salsinger that they take a little stroll and see if the old-fashioneds are up to standard in other parts of the city.

So they leave the Bridle Grill, and the bartender is not sorry to see them depart, at that, as they are making him work too hard, and they walk north on Broadway, arm-in-arm, stopping here and there to have a few drinks, and all the time Calvin Colby is talking about the great injustice that has been done Rupert Salsinger.

By and by they come to Columbus Circle, and in Columbus Circle there are many little groups of citizens, and each group is gathered around a guy standing on a box making a speech, so there are maybe ten different groups, and ten different guys making speeches, although each guy is only talking to his own group, but they are all talking at once, so they make quite a racket.

Now of course all this is a very familiar scene to anybody that ever goes through Columbus Circle in the evening, but it seems that Calvin Colby never before witnesses such a thing, as he does not visit Columbus Circle since infancy, and he is greatly astonished at what he beholds, and asks Rupert Salsinger what is the meaning of this.

Well, it seems that Rupert Salsinger knows all about the matter, and in fact it seems that Rupert Salsinger often takes part in these meetings personally when he has nothing else to do, and he explains to Calvin Colby that each of the speakers has a message of some kind to deliver to the people about one thing and another, and they are delivering them in Columbus Circle because it is a sort of public forum, and the coppers are not permitted to bother anybody with a message

here, although they may run them bow-legged if they try to deliver any message anywhere else.

Now Calvin Colby becomes greatly interested in this proposition and he listens in here and there on different groups, but he is unable to make heads or tails of what the speakers are talking about, except that most of them are weighing in the sacks on the rich, and on the government, and on this and that, and finally Calvin Colby says to Rupert Salsinger, like this:

'Why,' Calvin Colby says, 'the trouble with these parties is they are all over the layout. They are scattering their play too much. What we need here is a little centralization of ideas. Get me a box,' Calvin says.

Well, all the boxes around and about are occupied, but by this time, what with the beer, and the old-fashioneds, and all, Rupert Salsinger is a character of great determination, and he goes up to one speaker and yanks the box right from under him without saying aye, yes, or no, and this action leaves the speaker flat in Columbus Circle, but it seems that the speaker is about all out of ideas, anyway, and cannot think of anything more to say, so he does not mind losing his box as much as you might expect.

Then Rupert takes the box and plants it right in the centre of all the groups, and Calvin Colby gets up on the box and begins letting out loud yells to attract attention. Naturally Calvin Colby can out-yell any of the speakers in Columbus Circle, because he is fresh, and furthermore he is full of old-

fashioneds, and it is well known that there is nothing like old-fashioneds to help anybody yell.

Well, everyone in the Circle turns at once to see what the yelling is about and when they see a party in evening clothes, with a high hat and a white-lined opera cape on, naturally they are somewhat impressed, and they leave all the other speakers and gather around Calvin Colby.

Some think at first that maybe he is selling a patent medicine, or ballyhooing a dance hall with forty hostesses, and they expect to see his shirt bosom light up with an ad on it, as they cannot figure any other reason for anybody in such a make-up to be in Columbus Circle, but when Calvin Colby finally gets a big crowd around him, including not only the citizens who are listening to the other speakers, but many characters, male and female, who happen to be passing along the sidewalks and hear his yells, he speaks to them as follows, and to wit:

'Comrades,' Calvin Colby says, 'when I think of all the injustice in this world it almost makes me bust right out crying. My heart bleeds. I am very sad. All humanity cries out "Justice, justice," but what is the answer; Nothing, comrades,' he says.

Now at this point somebody back in the crowd pegs an egg at Calvin Colby's high hat, and cries out in a loud, coarse voice:

'Look at the daffydill.'

The egg just misses Calvin Colby's hat and continues on and strikes a member of the Communist party on the chin, and the member of the Communist party is slightly irritated, as he says he can use the egg for breakfast if it does not break when it meets his chin.

Well, naturally this interruption annoys Calvin Colby no little, and he stops a moment and tries to see who it is that is guilty of such uncouth conduct, and then he says:

'Comrades,' he says, 'if the jerk who just hurls the aforesaid remark and egg at me will kindly hold still until I reach him, I will guarantee to yank one of his arms off and beat his brains out with it.'

At this the crowd cheers Calvin Colby quite some, and there are cries for him to continue his address, although Calvin Colby has half a notion to stop right there and go to work on the party who pegs the egg, because such a course promises more fun for Calvin Colby than making a speech, but finally he resumes as follows:

'No, comrades,' he says, 'there is no justice, and to prove it I wish to present to you my friend, my pal, my comrade, Mr. Rupert Salsinger, who will now address you.'

So he makes room for Rupert Salsinger on the box, and Rupert puts on a really wonderful speech, because it seems that Rupert is not only a natural-born speaker, but he knows extracts from great speeches by such characters as Father Coughlin, Patrick Henry, F. D. Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln

and Robert Ingersoll, and he drops in these extracts here and there as he goes along, and they are very effective.

He tells of his own personal experiences with representatives of the capitalistic system, and while he does not mention them by name, he undoubtedly means Hymie Minsk and old man Bilby, and Rupert's remarks about his own suffering touch every heart, and there are cries of pity and rage from all parts of the crowd, although Rupert himself afterward admits that maybe he does give Hymie and old man Bilby a shade the worst of it in his statements.

By the time Rupert finishes, his audience is greatly excited, and Calvin Colby is sitting on the edge of the box half asleep, so Rupert wakes him up to make some more remarks, but now Calvin Colby is slightly bored by his surroundings and wishes to get away from this spot, and all he can think of to say is as follows:

'Comrades,' he says, 'let us stop talking, and go into action. The cry,' he says, 'is forward!'

And with this, Calvin Colby starts off down Broadway, walking in the middle of the street, and all he is thinking of at the moment is to remove himself from Columbus Circle, and Rupert starts off with him, but all the other citizens present fall in behind them, so there they are leading a big march.

There are only a few hundred citizens behind them when they start, but before they go two blocks this number

increases to several thousand, because naturally the spectacle of a character in a high hat and a white-lined opera cape leading a procession down Broadway is most intriguing to one and all who behold same, and everybody wishes to find out what it means.

Of course Calvin and Rupert Salsinger have no idea where they are going when they start off, and when they arrive at Fiftieth and Broadway, Calvin Colby is getting sick and tired of walking, and wishes one of his cars will come along and pick him up, and furthermore he is yearning for a few old-fashioned cocktails.

In fact, Calvin Colby is getting ready to cop a sneak on his followers, when Rupert Salsinger points out old man Bilby's shoe store, which of course is closed at this hour, as the seat of much of the injustice to him, and the member of the Communist party, who is in the procession, still thinking about the loss of the egg, hears what Rupert says, and steps over on the sidewalk and kicks in old man Bilby's door.

Well, in five minutes old man Bilby's shoe store is a total wreck, and everybody has a pair of shoes, including many characters who are never in the procession at all, and are by no means entitled to same. There is great confusion, and some of the shoes get all mixed up in this confusion, and in fact for weeks afterward parties are around Broadway with odd shoes trying to match them up.

Naturally the commotion brings out a number of officers of the law, who go around inquiring what is coming off here,

and when they are unable to learn what is coming off, they start slapping citizens right and left with their nightsticks, and the result is a great deal of new business for the near-by hospitals.

But this part of it no longer interests Calvin Colby and Rupert Salsinger, who retire from the scene and go elsewhere, but not before Rupert Salsinger gets into the store and picks out a pair of shoes for himself and carries them off under his arm.

Well, by and by the reporters from the newspapers arrive on the scene and start getting interviews here and there about the goings-on, and it seems from the stories in the papers the next morning that the reporters learn that it is all the upshot of a great new movement for social justice organized by Rupert Salsinger, a famous young student of such matters, and supported by Calvin Colby, the well-known young multimillionaire thinker, although of course it is a big surprise to Rupert Salsinger to learn that he is famous, and a much bigger surprise to Calvin Colby to hear that he is a thinker, and in fact this sounds like libel to Calvin Colby, when he gets around to reading it.

But it seems that what the newspapers see in this movement for social justice led by such young characters as Rupert Salsinger and Calvin Colby, more than anything else, is a revolution of youth against the old order, and in fact the papers make it a matter of great importance and by 8 a.m. the next morning the reporters and photographers from the afternoon bladders are almost breaking down the doors of

Calvin Colby's apartment on Park Avenue to interview him and take his picture.

Naturally, Calvin Colby is still in the hay at such an hour, and he does not wake up until 1.30 p.m. and by this time he does not remember about the movement for social justice, and in fact he will be greatly nonplussed to find himself sleeping with such a character as Rupert Salsinger if it is not for the fact that Calvin Colby is accustomed to finding himself sleeping with all kinds of characters.

He wakes Rupert Salsinger up and asks him what about a little of the hair of the dog that bites them, but Rupert is very ill, and all he can bear is a little straight Scotch, and then Rupert commences to recall vaguely some of the events of the night before, when Calvin Colby's butler brings in the morning papers, and tells them that fifty reporters and photographers are still waiting outside to see Calvin Colby, and that they are getting fretful, and that moreover Calvin Colby's loving parents are calling up every few minutes, wishing to know what he means by becoming a thinker.

Then Calvin Colby commences remembering a few things himself, and he worries no little about how he is going to explain to his loving parents. Naturally he cannot face reporters and photographers while he is in such a state of mind, so he gives Rupert Salsinger a little more straight Scotch, and lends Rupert a dressing-gown, and sends him out to see the reporters and photographers.

Well, Rupert Salsinger gives them quite an interview, and in fact he repeats as much of the speech he makes in Columbus Circle as he can remember, including the extracts from the speeches of F. D. Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln, and he tells them that he and Calvin Colby will continue this movement for social justice until the bad place freezes over, if necessary, because by now the straight Scotch is working very good in Rupert Salsinger, and he is by no means at any loss for words.

Now Rupert Salsinger is a very serious-minded young character and by no means a chump, and he sees that all this publicity may lead somewhere, so what does he do in the next few days but organize the American Amalgamation for Social Justice, with himself as president, and Calvin Colby as treasurer, and Calvin Colby's loving parents are so proud of their son becoming prominent at something else besides spilling dolls out of his automobiles that they donate five thousand slugs to the cause.

Furthermore, they settle with old man Bilby for the wrecking of his shoe store, and the loss of his shoes, including the pair taken away by Rupert Salsinger, although of course nobody but Rupert knows about these shoes, and he does not mention the matter publicly.

But Calvin Colby is getting sick and tired of all this business, because the reporters are always after him for interviews, and it is commencing to interfere with his occupation of getting around, especially as Rupert Salsinger is always after him, too, telling him to do this and that, and

one thing and another, and Calvin Colby is delighted when Rupert announces himself as a candidate for Congress on the Social Justice ticket, because Calvin figures that with Rupert in Congress he will not bother him any more, and he can resume getting around just where he leaves off.

Well, it seems that about the time Rupert Salsinger makes his announcement, Tammany Hall is greatly dissatisfied with the character who already represents it in Congress from Rupert's district, because he often votes in a manner that is by no means to the interest of this splendid organization, so somebody from the Hall has a talk with Rupert Salsinger, and reports that he is an honest, clean, upright young character, who is by no means sore at Tammany, or at least not so sore that he can never get over it.

Then it seems that Tammany quietly passes the word around Rupert Salsinger's district to vote for this honest, clean, upright young character, and such a word means that Rupert is 1 to 20 in the betting to be elected, even on a platform for social justice, and about this time Rupert begins thinking more than somewhat of Miss Minnie Schultz, and of how much he loves her.

Rupert is so busy that it is quite a spell since he finds leisure to get over to Tenth Avenue to see Miss Minnie Schultz and he requests Calvin Colby, as a personal favour, to step over and explain to Miss Minnie Schultz why he cannot appear before her in person.

So Calvin Colby goes over to Tenth Avenue and locates Miss Minnie Schultz at her papa's delicatessen store, and explains to her about Rupert, and Calvin Colby is greatly surprised to notice that Miss Minnie Schultz is very beautiful.

He notices that she has taffy-coloured hair, and big blue eyes, and a lovely speaking voice, and hands like the ears of little tiny white rabbits, and feet like little tiny mice, and a complexion like Grade-A milk, and a shape that is wonderful to behold, and great intelligence, and charm, and in fact Miss Minnie Schultz is the first doll Calvin Colby ever beholds that he does not figure a plaintiff.

He also notices a character skulking in the background of Miss Minnie Schultz whose name seems to be Gus Schmelk, and whose features seem to be very familiar to Calvin Colby, and also very distasteful, especially as this Gus Schmelk seems to be on very friendly terms with Miss Minnie Schultz, and in fact in the presence of Calvin Colby he gives her a pat on the pistol pocket, causing Calvin Colby's blood to boil out of loyalty to Rupert Salsinger.

However, Miss Minnie Schultz seems quite interested in hearing about Rupert, and says she hopes and trusts he is enjoying the best of health, and that he will come to see her soon, though she realizes from what she reads in the papers how busy he is, and she also says that she is personally as well and as happy as can be expected, and that business in her papa's delicatessen store is picking up.

Well, Calvin Colby reports much of the above situation to Rupert Salsinger, especially about Gus Schmelk, and tells Rupert that Gus impresses him as a low, degraded character, who will steal another's doll without any compunction of conscience whatever, and in fact Calvin Colby says to Rupert like this:

'If I am you,' he says, 'I will dispense with this social justice for a while and look after my interests with Miss Minnie Schultz. It is seldom in my career,' Calvin says, 'that I see such a shape as Miss Minnie Schultz possesses.'

Well, Rupert Salsinger sighs, and says he realizes that Calvin Colby's statements are only too true, especially about Gus Schmelk, and also about Miss Minnie Schultz's shape, but Rupert says he feels that social justice must come first with him above all else, even Miss Minnie Schultz's shape.

Then Rupert says to Calvin Colby:

'Comrade,' he says, 'I realize that you loathe and despise all characters of a female nature, but,' he says, 'I am going to ask you to make a great sacrifice for me. I will deem it an act of fealty to our cause, and of personal friendship,' Rupert says, 'if you will occasionally go over to Tenth Avenue and do anything you can to protect me in that direction from vipers in my bosom and snakes in the grass.'

There are tears in Rupert's eyes as he makes this request, and naturally Calvin Colby promises to assist him in this emergency, and presently between looking after Rupert's

interests with Miss Minnie Schultz and signing cheques as treasurer of the American Amalgamation for Social Justice for Rupert's campaign, Calvin Colby finds little time for his occupation of getting around.

Now in the meantime, in spite of being so busy, Rupert Salsinger finds himself brooding no little over Miss Minnie Schultz and Gus Schmelk, and finally one day he decides that he can spare a couple of hours to go over to Tenth Avenue and see Miss Minnie Schultz and present his proposal of marriage to her in person, so he calls her up and requests an interview with her, and it seems she can tell by the tone of his voice what is on his chest, and she says all right but to be sure and get over in an hour.

So Rupert Salsinger puts everything else aside, and dresses himself up in a new suit of clothes which he purchases from the treasury of the Amalgamated Association for Social Justice as part of his campaign expenses, and puts on the new shoes that he secures at old man Bilby's shoe store, and starts out from Calvin Colby's residence on Park Avenue, where Rupert is living ever since the first night he lands there.

Well, Rupert is passing the corner of Fiftieth Street and Broadway when who does he see standing in front of Mindy's restaurant but Hymie Minsk, the horse player, and then Rupert suddenly remembers that while social justice is going forward very nicely in most quarters that he never really gets justice from Hymie Minsk.

So Rupert Salsinger steps up behind Hymie, and takes him by the nape of the neck and kicks Hymie's pants up the street to Fifty-third, using his new shoes for this purpose, and, what is more, doing a much better job on Hymie than Hymie does on him, as Hymie has no books whatsoever in his hip pocket to slow up Rupert's kicking.

When he finally lets Hymie go with a final kick in the pants, Rupert starts across Fifty-third Street towards Tenth Avenue, but after he goes a couple of blocks he notices that his feet are giving him great pain, and he realizes that his new shoes must be too tight for him, and what with his walking, and the extra exertion of kicking Hymie Minsk's pants, these shoes are commencing to pinch his puppies quite some.

The pain finally becomes so great that Rupert sits down on the steps of a school house and takes off his shoes to let his feet stop aching, and he sits there for anyway fifteen minutes, when it occurs to him that the hour Miss Minnie Schultz mentions is up, so he tries to put the shoes back on his feet again, but it seems his feet swell up to such an extent that the shoes will not go on again, so Rupert resumes his journey in his stocking feet, but carrying the shoes in his hand.

When he arrives in sight of the delicatessen store conducted by Miss Minnie Schultz's papa, he sees Miss Minnie Schultz standing on the sidewalk out in front, and he also sees Gus Schmelk walking across the street, and disappearing inside his own store, which is a scene that is most odious to Rupert Salsinger although he does not see a

large automobile with Calvin Colby in it just going around the corner.

Well, Rupert Salsinger hastens forward with a glad smile, and he tips his hat with the hand which is not carrying the shoes, and he says to Miss Minnie Schultz like this:

'Minnie,' Rupert says, 'I love you with all my heart and soul, and now that my future is open before me, bright and shining, I wish you to be my wife, and never mind what your papa says to the contrary about Gus Schmelk. He is strictly a wrong gee. I mean Gus Schmelk,' Rupert says. 'Let us be married at once, and my friend, my pal, my comrade, Mr. Calvin Colby, will stand up with us as my best man.'

'Rupert,' Miss Minnie Schultz says, 'if you are here fifteen minutes ago, I will undoubtedly accept you. When you call me on the telephone and make an appointment for an interview with me, I say to myself, I wait all these years for Rupert to speak, and now I will give him just one more hour of my life, and not one minute more, for another is requesting my hand. On the expiration of the hour to the dot,' Miss Minnie Schultz says, 'I pledge myself to him. Rupert,' she says, 'as far as I am personally concerned you are a goner.'

Naturally, Rupert Salsinger is greatly vexed to hear this news, and in fact he is so vexed that he takes the tight shoes that are the cause of his tardiness, and throws them as far as he can, and as straight as he can, which is plumb across the

street and through the plate-glass window of Gus Schmelk's delicatessen store.

The next thing anybody knows, Rupert Salsinger is hastening up Tenth Avenue in his stocking feet, and Gus Schmelk is right behind him calling him names of such a crude nature that Miss Minnie Schultz retires to her papa's delicatessen store, although this does not prevent her from seeing a character leave Gus Schmelk's store with Rupert's tight shoes under his arm, and it does not prevent her from recognizing this character as the member of the Communist party.

Well, I see in the papers that Congressman Rupert Salsinger is going to marry some society doll in Washington, who is a widow with plenty of money left to her by her late husband, but I do not believe Rupert will be any happier than Calvin Colby, who is very busy at this time opening the twenty-second branch of the Schultz-Colby Delicatessen Stores, Inc., and who is greatly pleased over being married to Miss Minnie Schultz.

But although Gus Schmelk's store is in the new combination, and Gus himself is a member of the Board of Directors of same, Calvin Colby never really forgets that Gus Schmelk is the party who almost ruins his high hat with an egg in Columbus Circle the night Calvin makes the public address.

Lonely Heart

It seems that one spring day, a character by the name of Nicely-Nicely Jones arrives in a ward in a hospital in the City of Newark, N.J., with such a severe case of pneumonia that the attending physician, who is a horse player at heart, and very absent-minded, writes 100, 40 and 10 on the chart over Nicely-Nicely's bed.

It comes out afterward that what the physician means is that it is 100 to 1 in his line that Nicely-Nicely does not recover at all, 40 to 1 that he will not last a week, and 10 to 1 that if he does get well he will never be the same again.

Well, Nicely-Nicely is greatly discouraged when he sees this price against him, because he is personally a chalk eater when it comes to price, a chalk eater being a character who always plays the short-priced favourites, and he can see that such a long shot as he is has very little chance to win. In fact, he is so discouraged that he does not even feel like taking a little of the price against him to show.

Afterward there is some criticism of Nicely-Nicely among the citizens around Mindy's restaurant on Broadway, because he does not advise them of this marker, as these citizens are always willing to bet that what Nicely-Nicely dies of will be over-feeding and never anything small like pneumonia, for Nicely-Nicely is known far and wide as a character who dearly loves to commit eating.

But Nicely-Nicely is so discouraged that he does not as much as send them word that he is sick, let alone anything about the price. He just pulls the covers up over his head and lies there waiting for the finish and thinking to himself what a tough thing it is to pass away of pneumonia, and especially in Newark, N.J., and nobody along Broadway knows of his predicament until Nicely-Nicely appears in person some months later and relates this story to me.

So now I will tell you about Nicely-Nicely Jones, who is called Nicely-Nicely because any time anybody asks him how he is feeling, or how things are going with him, he always says nicely, nicely, in a very pleasant tone of voice, although generally this is by no means the gospel truth, especially about how he is going.

He is a character of maybe forty-odd, and he is short, and fat, and very good-natured, and what he does for a livelihood is the best he can, which is an occupation that is greatly overcrowded at all times along Broadway.

Mostly, Nicely-Nicely follows the races, playing them whenever he has anything to play them with, but anyway following them, and the reason he finds himself in Newark, N.J., in the first place is because of a business proposition in connection with the races. He hears of a barber in Newark, N.J., who likes to make a wager on a sure thing now and then, and Nicely-Nicely goes over there to tell him about a sure thing that is coming up at Pimlico the very next Tuesday.

Nicely-Nicely figures that the barber will make a wager on this sure thing and cut him in on the profits, but it seems that somebody else gets to the barber the week before with a sure thing that is coming up a Monday, and the barber bets on this sure thing, and the sure thing blows, and now the barber will have to shave half of Newark, N.J., to catch even.

Nicely-Nicely always claims that the frost he meets when he approaches the barber with his sure thing gives him a cold that results in the pneumonia I am speaking of, and furthermore that his nervous system is so disorganized by the barber chasing him nine blocks with a razor in his hand that he has no vitality left to resist the germs.

But at that it seems that he has enough vitality left to beat the pneumonia by so far the attending physician is somewhat embarrassed, although afterward he claims that he makes a mistake in chalking up the 100, 40 and 10 on Nicely-Nicely's chart. The attending physician claims he really means the character in the bed next to Nicely-Nicely, who passes away of lockjaw the second day after Nicely-Nicely arrives.

Well, while he is convalescing in the hospital of this pneumonia, Nicely-Nicely has a chance to do plenty of thinking, and what he thinks about most is the uselessness of the life he leads all these years, and how he has nothing to show for same except some high-class knowledge of race horses, which at this time is practically a drug on the market.

There are many other patients in the same ward with Nicely-Nicely, and he sees their ever-loving wives, and

daughters, and maybe their sweet-peas visiting them, and hears their cheerful chatter, and he gets to thinking that here he is without chick or child, and no home to go to, and it just about breaks his heart.

He gets to thinking of how he will relish a soft, gentle, loving hand on his brow at this time, and finally he makes a pass at one of the nurses, figuring she may comfort his lonely hours, but what she lays on his brow is a beautiful straight right cross, and furthermore she hollers watch, murder, police, and Nicely-Nicely has to pretend he has a relapse and is in a delirium to avoid being mistreated by the internes.

As Nicely-Nicely begins getting some of his strength back, he takes to thinking, too, of such matters as food, and when Nicely-Nicely thinks of food it is generally very nourishing food, such as a nice double sirloin, smothered with chops, and thinking of these matters, and of hamburgers, and wiener schnitzel and goulash with noodles, and lamb stew, adds to his depression, especially when they bring him the light diet provided for invalids by the hospital.

He takes to reading to keep himself from thinking of his favourite dishes, and of his solitary life, and one day in a bundle of old magazines and newspapers that they give him to read, he comes upon a bladder that is called the *Matrimonial Tribune*, which seems to be all about marriage, and in this *Matrimonial Tribune* Nicely-Nicely observes an advertisement that reads as follows:

LONELY HEART

> Widow of middle age, no children, cheerful companion, neat, excellent cook, owner of nice farm in Central New Jersey, wishes to meet home-loving gentleman of not more than fifty who need not necessarily be possessed of means but who will appreciate warm, tender companionship and pleasant home. Object, matrimony. Address Lonely Heart, this paper.

Well, Nicely-Nicely feels romance stirring in his bosom as he reads these lines, because he is never married, and has no idea that marriage is as described in this advertisement. So what does he do but write a letter to Lonely Heart in care of the *Matrimonial Tribune* stating that he is looking for a warm, tender companionship, and a pleasant home, and an excellent cook, especially an excellent cook, all his life, and the next thing he knows he is gazing into what at first seems to be an old-fashioned round cheese, but which he finally makes out as the face of a large Judy seated at his bedside.

She is anywhere between forty and fifty-five years of age, and she is as big and rawboned as a first baseman, but she is by no means a crow. In fact, she is rather nice-looking, except that she has a pair of eyes as pale as hens' eggs, and these eyes never change expression.

She asks Nicely-Nicely as many questions as an assistant district attorney, and especially if he has any money, and does he have any relatives, and Nicely-Nicely is able to state truthfully that he is all out of both, although she does not seem to mind. She wishes to know about his personal habits, and Nicely-Nicely says they are all good, but of course he

does not mention his habit of tapping out any time a 4-to-5 shot comes along, which is as bad a habit as anybody can have, and finally she says she is well satisfied with him and will be pleased to marry him when he is able to walk.

She has a short, sharp voice that reminds Nicely-Nicely of a tough starter talking to the jockeys at the post, and she never seems to smile, and, take her all around, the chances are she is not such a character as Nicely-Nicely will choose as his ever-loving wife if he has the pick of a herd, but he figures that she is not bad for an off-hand draw.

So Nicely-Nicely and the Widow Crumb are married, and they go to live on her farm in Central New Jersey, and it is a very nice little farm, to be sure, if you care for farms, but it is ten miles from the nearest town, and in a very lonesome country, and furthermore there are no neighbours handy, and the Widow Crumb does not have a telephone or even a radio in her house.

In fact, about all she has on this farm are a couple of cows, and a horse, and a very old joskin with a chin whisker and rheumatism and a mean look, whose name seems to be Harley something, and who also seems to be the Widow Crumb's hired hand. Nicely-Nicely can see at once that Harley has no use for him, but afterward he learns that Harley has no use for anybody much, not even himself.

Well, it comes on supper-time the first night. Nicely-Nicely is there and he is delighted to observe that the Widow Crumb is making quite an uproar in the kitchen with the pots and

pans, and this uproar is music to Nicely-Nicely's ears as by now he is in the mood to put on the hot meat very good, and he is wondering if the Widow Crumb is as excellent a cook as she lets on in her advertisement.

It turns out that she is even better. It turns out that she is as fine a cook as ever straddles a skillet, and the supper she spreads for Nicely-Nicely is too good for a king. There is round steak hammered flat and fried in a pan, with thick cream gravy, and hot biscuits, and corn on the cob, and turnip greens, and cottage-fried potatoes, and lettuce with hot bacon grease poured over it, and apple-pie, and coffee, and I do not know what all else, and Nicely-Nicely almost founders himself, because it is the first time since he leaves the hospital that he gets a chance to move into real food.

Harley, the old joskin, eats with them, and Nicely-Nicely notices that there is a fourth place set at the table, and he figures that maybe another hired hand is going to show up, but nobody appears to fill the vacant chair, and at first Nicely-Nicely is glad of it, as it gives him more room in which to eat.

But then Nicely-Nicely notices that the Widow Crumb loads the plate at the vacant place with even more food than she does any of the others, and all through the meal Nicely-Nicely keeps expecting someone to come in and knock off these victuals. Nobody ever appears, however, and when they are through eating, the Widow Crumb clears up the extra place the same as the others, and scrapes the food off the plate into a garbage pail.

Well, of course, Nicely-Nicely is somewhat perplexed by this proceeding, but he does not ask any questions, because where he comes from only suckers go around asking questions. The next morning at breakfast, and again at dinner, and in fact at every meal put on the table the extra place is fixed, and the Widow Crumb goes through the same performance of serving the food to this place, and afterward throwing it away, and while Nicely-Nicely commences thinking it is a great waste of excellent food, he keeps his trap closed.

Now being the Widow Crumb's husband is by no means a bad dodge, as she is anything but a gabby Judy, and will go all day long without saying more than a few words, and as Nicely-Nicely is a character who likes to chat this gives him a chance to do all the talking, although she never seems to be listening to him much. She seldom asks him to do any work, except now and then to help the old joskin around the barn, so Nicely-Nicely commences to figure this is about as soft a drop-in as anybody can wish.

The only drawback is that sometimes the Widow Crumb likes to sit on Nicely-Nicely's lap of an evening, and as he does not have much lap to begin with, and it is getting less every day under her feeding, this is quite a handicap, but he can see that it comes of her affectionate nature, and he bears up the best he can.

One evening after they are married several months, the Widow Crumb is sitting on what is left of Nicely-Nicely's

lap, and she puts her arms around his neck, and speaks to him as follows:

'Nicely,' she says, 'do you love me?'

'Love you?' Nicely-Nicely says. 'Why, I love you like anything. Maybe more. You are a wonderful cook. How can I help loving you?' he says.

'Well,' the Widow Crumb says, 'do you ever stop to consider that if anything happens to you, I will be left here lone and lorn, because you do not have any means with which to provide for me after you are gone?'

'What do you mean after I am gone?' Nicely-Nicely says. 'I am not going anywhere.'

'Life is always a very uncertain proposition,' the Widow Crumb says. 'Who can say when something is apt to happen to you and take you away from me, leaving me without a cent of life insurance?'

Naturally, Nicely-Nicely has to admit to himself that what she says is very true, and of course he never gives the matter a thought before, because he figures from the way the Widow Crumb feeds him that she must have some scratch of her own stashed away somewhere, although this is the first time the subject of money is ever mentioned between them since they are married.

'Why,' Nicely-Nicely says, 'you are quite right, and I will get my life insured as soon as I get enough strength to go out and raise a few dibs. Yes, indeed,' Nicely-Nicely says, 'I will take care of this situation promptly.'

Well, the Widow Crumb says there is no sense in waiting on a matter as important as this, and that she will provide the money for the payment of the premiums herself, and for Nicely-Nicely to forget about going out to raise anything, as she cannot bear to have him out of her sight for any length of time, and then she gets to telling Nicely-Nicely what she is going to give him for breakfast, and he forgets about the insurance business.

But the next thing Nicely-Nicely knows, a thin character with a nose like a herring comes out from town, and there is another character with him who has whiskers that smell of corn whisky, but who seems to be a doctor, and in practically no time at all Nicely-Nicely's life is insured for five thousand dollars, with double indemnity if he gets used up by accident, and Nicely-Nicely is greatly pleased by this arrangement because he sees that he is now worth something for the first time in his career, although everybody on Broadway claims it is a terrible overlay by the insurance company when they hear the story.

Well, several months more go by, and Nicely-Nicely finds life on the farm very pleasant and peaceful as there is nothing much for him to do but eat and sleep, and he often finds himself wondering how he ever endures his old life,

following the races and associating with the low characters of the turf.

He gets along first class with the Widow Crumb and never has a cross word with her, and he even makes friends with the old joskin, Harley, by helping him with his work, although Nicely-Nicely is really not fitted by nature for much work, and what he likes best at the farm is the eating and sleeping, especially the eating.

For a while he finds it difficult to get as much sleep as he requires, because the Widow Crumb is a great hand for staying up late reading books in their bedroom by kerosene lamp, and at the same time eating molasses candy which she personally manufactures, and sometimes she does both in bed, and the molasses candy bothers Nicely-Nicely no little until he becomes accustomed to it.

Once he tries reading one of her books to put himself to sleep after she dozes off ahead of him, but he discovers that it is all about nothing but spiritualism, and about parties in this life getting in touch with characters in the next world, and Nicely-Nicely has no interest whatever in matters of this nature, although he personally knows a character by the name of Spooks McGurk who claims to be a spiritualist, and who makes a nice thing of it in connection with tips on the races, until a race-track fuzz catches up with him.

Nicely-Nicely never discusses the books with the Widow Crumb, because in the first place he figures it is none of his business, and in the second place, the more she reads the

better chance he has of getting to sleep before she starts snoring, because it seems that as a snorer the Widow Crumb is really all-America material, although of course Nicely-Nicely is too much of a gentleman to make an issue of this.

She gives him three meals every day, and every meal is better than the last, and finally Nicely-Nicely is as fat as a goose, and can scarcely wobble. But he notices that the Widow Crumb never once fails to set the fourth place that nobody ever fills, and furthermore he suddenly commences to notice that she always puts the best cuts of meat, and the best of everything else on the plate at this place, even though she throws it all away afterward.

Well, this situation preys on Nicely-Nicely's mind, as he cannot bear to see all this good fodder going to waste, so one morning he gets hold of old Harley and puts the siphon on him, because by this time Harley talks freely with Nicely-Nicely, although Nicely-Nicely can see that Harley is somewhat simple in spots and his conversation seldom makes much sense.

Anyway, he asks Harley what the Widow Crumb's idea is about the extra place at the table, and Harley says like this: 'Why,' he says, 'the place is for Jake.'

'Jake who?' Nicely-Nicely says.

'I do not recall his other name,' Harley says. 'He is her third or fourth husband, I do not remember which. Jake is the only one the Widow Crumb ever loves, although she does not

discover this until after Jake departs. So,' Harley says, 'in memory of Jake she always sets his place at the table, and gives him the best she has. She misses Jake and wishes to feel that he is still with her.'

'What happens to Jake?' Nicely-Nicely says.

'Arsenic,' Harley says. 'Jake departs ten years ago.'

Well, of course all this is news to Nicely-Nicely, and he becomes very thoughtful to be sure, because in all the time he is married to her the Widow Crumb does not crack to him about her other husbands, and in fact Nicely-Nicely has no idea there is ever more than one.

'What happens to the others?' he says. 'Do they depart the same as Jake?'

'Yes,' Harley says, 'they all depart. One by one. I remember Number Two well. In fact, you remind me of him. Carbon monoxide,' Harley says. 'A charcoal stove in his room. It is most ingenious. The coroner says Number Three commits suicide by hanging himself with a rope in the barn loft. Number Three is small and weak, and it is no trouble whatever to handle him.

'Then comes Jake,' Harley says, 'unless Jake is Number Three and the hanging item is Number Four. I do not remember exactly. But the Widow Crumb never employs arsenic or other matters of this nature again. It is too slow.

Jake lingers for hours. Besides,' Harley says, 'she realizes it may leave traces if anybody happens to get nosy.

'Jake is a fine-looking character,' Harley says. 'But a ne'er-do-well. He is a plumber from Salt Lake City, Utah, and has a hearty laugh. He is always telling funny stories. He is a great eater, even better than you, and he loves beans the way the Widow Crumb cooks them, with bacon and tomatoes. He suffers no little from the arsenic. He gets it in his beans. Number Five comes upon a black widow spider in his bed. He is no good. I mean Number Five.'

Well, by this time, Nicely-Nicely is very thoughtful to be sure, because what Harley says is commencing to sound somewhat disquieting.

'Number Six steps on a plank in the doorway of the house that drops a two-hundred-pound keystone on his head,' Harley says. 'The Widow Crumb personally figures this out herself. She is very bright. It is like a figure-4 trap, and has to be very accurate. An inch one way or the other, and the stone misses Number Six. I remember he has a big wen on the back of his neck. He is a carpenter from Keokuk, Iowa,' Harley says.

'Why,' Nicely-Nicely says, 'do you mean to say that the Widow Crumb purposely arranges to use up husbands in the manner you describe?'

'Oh, sure,' Harley says. 'Why do you suppose she marries them? It is a good living to her because of the insurance,' he

says, although,' he says, 'to show you how bright she is, she does not insure Number Five for a dime, so people can never say she is making a business of the matter. He is a total loss to her, but it quiets talk. I am wondering,' Harley says, 'what she will think up for you.'

Well, Nicely-Nicely now commences to wonder about this, too, and he hopes and trusts that whatever she thinks up it will not be a black widow spider, because if there is one thing Nicely-Nicely despises, it is insects. Furthermore, he does not approve of hanging, or of dropping weights on people.

After giving the matter much thought, he steps into the house and mentions to the Widow Crumb that he will like to pay a little visit to town, figuring that if he can get to town, she will never see him again for heel dust.

But he finds that the Widow Crumb is by no means in favour of the idea of him visiting the town. In fact, she says it will bring great sorrow to her if he absents himself from her side more than two minutes, and moreover, she points out that it is coming on winter, and that the roads are bad, and she cannot spare the horse for such a trip just now.

Well, Nicely-Nicely says he is a fair sort of walker and, in fact, he mentions that he once walks from Saratoga Springs to Albany to avoid a bookmaker who claims there is a slight difference between them, but the Widow Crumb says she will not hear of him trying to walk to town because it may develop varicose veins in his legs.

In fact, Nicely-Nicely can see that the subject of his leaving the farm is very distasteful to her in every respect, and the chances are he will feel quite flattered by her concern for him if he does not happen to go into the house again a little later this same afternoon, and find her cleaning a double-barrelled shotgun.

She says she is thinking of going rabbit hunting, and wishes him to keep her company, saying it may take his mind off the idea of a visit to town; but she goes out of the room for a minute, and Nicely-Nicely picks up one of the shotgun shells she lays out on a table, and notices that it is loaded with buckshot.

So he tells her he guesses he will not go, as he is not feeling so good, and in fact he is not feeling so good, at that, because it seems that Nicely-Nicely is a rabbit hunter from infancy, and he never before hears of anyone hunting these creatures with buckshot. Then the Widow Crumb says all right, she will postpone her hunting until he feels better, but Nicely-Nicely cannot help noticing that she loads the shotgun and stands it in a corner where it is good and handy.

Well, Nicely-Nicely now sits down and gives this general situation some serious consideration, because he is now convinced that the Widow Crumb is unworthy of his companionship as a husband. In fact, Nicely-Nicely makes up his mind to take steps at his earliest convenience to sue her for divorce on the grounds of incompatibility, but in the meantime he has to think up a means of getting away from

her, and while he is thinking of this phase of the problem, she calls him to supper.

It is now coming on dark, and she has the lamps lit and the table set when Nicely-Nicely goes into the dining-room, and a fire is going in the base burner, and usually this is a pleasant and comforting scene to Nicely-Nicely, but to-night he does not seem to find it as attractive as usual.

As he sits down at the table he notices that Harley is not present at the moment, though his place at the table is laid, and as a rule Harley is Johnny-at-the-rat-hole when it comes time to scoff, and moreover he is a pretty good doer at that. The fourth place that nobody ever occupies is also laid as usual, and now that he knows who this place is for, Nicely-Nicely notes that it is more neatly laid than his own, and that none of the china at this place is chipped, and that the bread and butter, and the salt and pepper, and the vinegar cruet and the bottle of Worcestershire sauce are handier to it than to any other place, and naturally his feelings are deeply wounded.

Then the Widow Crumb comes out of the kitchen with two plates loaded with spare-ribs and sauerkraut, and she puts one plate in front of Nicely-Nicely, and the other at Jake's place, and she says to Nicely-Nicely like this:

'Nicely,' she says, 'Harley is working late down at the barn, and when you get through with your supper, you can go down and call him. But,' she says, 'go ahead and eat first.'

Then she returns to the kitchen, which is right next to the dining-room with a swinging door in between, and Nicely-Nicely now observes that the very choicest spare-ribs are on Jake's plate, and also the most kraut, and this is really more than Nicely-Nicely can bear, for if there is one thing he adores it is spare-ribs, so he gets to feeling very moody to be sure about this discrimination, and he turns to Jake's place, and in a very sarcastic tone of voice he speaks out loud as follows:

'Well,' he says, 'it is pretty soft for you, you big lob, living on the fat of the land around here.'

Now of course what Nicely-Nicely is speaking is what he is thinking, and he does not realize that he is speaking out loud until the Widow Crumb pops into the dining-room carrying a bowl of salad, and looking all around and about.

'Nicely,' she says, 'do I hear you talking to someone?'

Well, at first Nicely-Nicely is about to deny it, but then he takes another look at the choice spare-ribs on Jake's plate, and he figures that he may as well let her know that he is on to her playing Jake for a favourite over him, and maybe cure her of it, for by this time Nicely-Nicely is so vexed about the spare-ribs that he almost forgets about leaving the farm, and is thinking of his future meals, so he says to the Widow Crumb like this:

'Why, sure,' he says. 'I am talking to Jake.'

'Jake?' she says. 'What Jake?'

And with this she starts looking all around and about again, and Nicely-Nicely can see that she is very pale, and that her hands are shaking so that she can scarcely hold the bowl of salad, and there is no doubt but what she is agitated no little, and quite some.

'What Jake?' the Widow Crumb says again.

Nicely-Nicely points to the empty chair, and says:

'Why, Jake here,' he says. 'You know Jake. Nice fellow, Jake.'

Then Nicely-Nicely goes on talking to the empty chair as follows:

'I notice you are not eating much to-night, Jake,' Nicely-Nicely says. 'What is the matter, Jake? The food cannot disagree with you, because it is all picked out and cooked to suit you, Jake. The best is none too good for you around here, Jake,' he says.

Then he lets on that he is listening to something Jake is saying in reply, and Nicely-Nicely says is that so, and I am surprised, and what do you think of that, and tut-tut, and my-my, just as if Jake is talking a blue streak to him, although, of course, Jake is by no means present.

Now Nicely-Nicely is really only being sarcastic in this conversation for the Widow Crumb's benefit, and naturally

he does not figure that she will take it seriously, because he knows she can see Jake is not there, but Nicely-Nicely happens to look at her while he is talking, and he observes that she is still standing with the bowl of salad in her hands, and looking at the empty chair with a most unusual expression on her face, and in fact, it is such an unusual expression that it makes Nicely-Nicely feel somewhat uneasy, and he readies himself up to dodge the salad bowl at any minute.

He commences to remember the loaded shotgun in the corner, and what Harley gives him to understand about the Widow Crumb's attitude towards Jake, and Nicely-Nicely is sorry he ever brings Jake's name up, but it seems that Nicely-Nicely now finds that he cannot stop talking to save his life with the Widow Crumb standing there with the unusual expression on her face, and then he remembers the books she reads in her bed at night, and he goes on as follows:

'Maybe the pains in your stomach are just indigestion, Jake,' he says. 'I have stomach trouble in my youth myself. You are suffering terribly, eh, Jake? Well, maybe a little of the old bicarb will help you, Jake. Oh,' Nicely-Nicely says, 'there he goes.'

And with this he jumps up and runs to Jake's chair and lets on that he is helping a character up from the floor, and as he stoops over and pretends to be lifting this character, Nicely-Nicely grunts no little, as if the character is very heavy, and the grunts are really on the level with Nicely-Nicely as he is

now full of spare-ribs, because he never really stops eating while he is talking, and stooping is not easy for him.

At these actions the Widow Crumb lets out a scream and drops the bowl of salad on the floor.

'I will help you to bed, Jake,' he says. 'Poor Jake. I know your stomach hurts, Jake. There now, Jake,' he says, 'take it easy. I know you are suffering horribly, but I will get something for you to ease the pain. Maybe it is the sauerkraut,' Nicely-Nicely says.

Then when he seems to get Jake up on his legs, Nicely-Nicely pretends to be assisting him across the floor towards the bedroom and all the time he is talking in a comforting tone to Jake, although you must always remember that there really is no Jake.

Now, all of a sudden, Nicely-Nicely hears the Widow Crumb's voice, and it is nothing but a hoarse whisper that sounds very strange in the room, as she says like this:

'Yes,' she says, 'it is Jake. I see him. I see him as plain as day.'

Well, at this Nicely-Nicely is personally somewhat startled, and he starts looking around and about himself, and it is a good thing for Jake that Nicely-Nicely is not really assisting Jake or Jake will find himself dropped on the floor, as the Widow Crumb says:

'Oh, Jake,' she says, 'I am so sorry. I am sorry for you in your suffering. I am sorry you ever leave me. I am sorry for everything. Please forgive me, Jake,' she says. 'I love you.'

Then the Widow Crumb screams again and runs through the swinging door into the kitchen and out the kitchen door and down the path that leads to the barn about two hundred yards away, and it is plain to be seen that she is very nervous. In fact, the last Nicely-Nicely sees of her before she disappears in the darkness down the path, she is throwing her hands up in the air, and letting out little screams, as follows: eee-eee-eee, and calling out old Harley's name.

Then Nicely-Nicely hears one extra loud scream, and after this there is much silence, and he figures that now is the time for him to take his departure, and he starts down the same path towards the barn, but figuring to cut off across the fields to the road that leads to the town when he observes a spark of light bobbing up and down on the path ahead of him, and presently he comes upon old Harley with a lantern in his hand.

Harley is down on his knees at what seems to be a big, round hole in the ground, and this hole is so wide it extends clear across the path, and Harley is poking his lantern down the hole, and when he sees Nicely-Nicely, he says:

'Oh,' he says, 'there you are. I guess there is some mistake here,' he says. 'The Widow Crumb tells me to wait in the barn until after supper and she will send you out after me, and,' Harley says, 'she also tells me to be sure and remove the

cover of this old well as soon as it comes on dark. And,' Harley says, 'of course, I am expecting to find you in the well at this time, but who is in there but the Widow Crumb. I hear her screech as she drops in. I judge she must be hastening along the path and forgets about telling me to remove the cover of the well,' Harley says. 'It is most confusing,' he says.

Then he pokes his lantern down the well again, and leans over and shouts as follows:

'Hello, down there,' Harley shouts. 'Hello, hello, hello.'

But all that happens is an echo comes out of the well like this: Hello. And Nicely-Nicely observes that there is nothing to be seen down the well, but a great blackness.

'It is very deep, and dark, and cold down there,' Harley says. 'Deep, and dark, and cold, and half full of water. Oh, my poor baby,' he says.

Then Harley busts out crying as if his heart will break, and in fact he is so shaken by his sobs that he almost drops the lantern down the well.

Naturally Nicely-Nicely is somewhat surprised to observe these tears because personally he is by no means greatly distressed by the Widow Crumb being down the well, especially when he thinks of how she tries to put him down the well first, and finally he asks Harley why he is so downcast, and Harley speaks as follows:

'I love her,' Harley says. 'I love her very, very, very much. I am her Number One husband, and while she divorces me thirty years ago when it comes out that I have a weak heart, and the insurance companies refuse to give me a policy, I love her just the same. And now,' Harley says, 'here she is down a well.'

And with this he begins hollering into the hole some more, but the Widow Crumb never personally answers a human voice in this life again and when the story comes out, many citizens claim this is a right good thing, to be sure.

So Nicely-Nicely returns to Broadway, and he brings with him the sum of eleven hundred dollars, which is what he has left of the estate of his late ever-loving wife from the sale of the farm, and one thing and another, after generously declaring old Harley in for fifty per cent. of his bit when Harley states that the only ambition he has left in life is to rear a tombstone to the memory of the Widow Crumb, and Nicely-Nicely announces that he is through with betting on horses, and other frivolity, and will devote his money to providing himself with food and shelter, and maybe a few clothes.

Well, the chances are Nicely-Nicely will keep his vow, too, but what happens the second day of his return, but he observes in the entries for the third race at Jamaica a horse by the name of Apparition, at 10 to 1 in the morning line, and Nicely-Nicely considers this entry practically a message to him, so he goes for his entire bundle on Apparition.

And it is agreed by one and all along Broadway who knows Nicely-Nicely's story that nobody in his right mind can possibly ignore such a powerful hunch as this, even though it loses, and Nicely-Nicely is again around doing the best he can.

The Brakeman's Daughter

It is coming on spring in Newark, New Jersey, and one nice afternoon I am standing on Broad Street with a guy from Cleveland, Ohio, by the name of The Humming Bird, speaking of this and that, and one thing and another, when along comes a very tasty-looking young doll.

In fact, she is a doll with black hair, and personally I claim there is nothing more restful to the eye than a doll with black hair, because it is even money, or anyway 9 to 10, that it is the natural colour of the hair, as it seems that dolls will change the colour of their hair to any colour but black, and why this is nobody knows, except that it is just the way dolls are.

Well, besides black hair, this doll has a complexion like I do not know what, and little feet and ankles, and a way of walking that is very pleasant to behold. Personally, I always take a gander at a doll's feet and ankles before I start

handicapping her, because the way I look at it, the feet and ankles are the big tell in the matter of class, although I wish to state that I see some dolls in my time who have large feet and big ankles, but who are by no means bad.

But this doll I am speaking of is 100 per cent. in every respect, and as she passes, The Humming Bird looks at her, and she looks at The Humming Bird, and it is just the same as if they hold a two hours' conversation on the telephone, for they are both young, and it is spring, and the way language can pass between young guys and young dolls in the spring without them saying a word is really most surprising, and, in fact, it is practically uncanny.

Well, I can see that The Humming Bird is somewhat confused for a minute, while the young doll seems to go right off into a trance, and she starts crossing the street against the lights, which is not only unlawful in Newark, New Jersey, but most indiscreet, and she is about to be run down and mashed like a turnip by one of Big False Face's beer trucks when The Humming Bird hops out into the street and yanks her out of danger, while the jockey looking back and yelling words you will scarcely believe are known to anybody in Newark, New Jersey.

Then The Humming Bird and the young doll stand on the sidewalk chewing the fat for a minute or two, and it is plain to be seen that the doll is very much obliged to The Humming Bird, and it is also plain to be seen that The Humming Bird will give anyway four bobs to have the jockey of the beer truck where he can talk to him quietly.

Finally the doll goes on across the street, but this time she keeps her head up and watches where she is going, and The Humming Bird comes back to me, and I ask him if he finds out who she is, and does he date her up, or what? But in answer to my questions, The Humming Bird states to me as follows:

'To tell the truth,' The Humming Bird says, 'I neglect these details, because,' he says, 'I am already dated up to go out with Big False Face to-night to call on a doll who is daffy to meet me. Otherwise,' he says, 'I will undoubtedly make arrangements to see more of this pancake I just save from rack and ruin.

'But,' The Humming Bird says, 'Big Falsy tells me I am going to meet the most wonderful doll in the world, and one that is very difficult to meet, so I cannot be picking up any excess at this time. In fact,' he says, 'Big Falsy tells me that every guy in this town will give his right leg for the privilege of meeting the doll in question, but she will have no part of them. But it seems that she sees me talking to Big Falsy on the street yesterday, and now nothing will do but she must meet up with me personally. Is it not remarkable,' The Humming Bird says, 'the way dolls go for me?'

Well, I say it is, for I can see that The Humming Bird is such a guy as thinks he has something on the dolls, and for all I know maybe he has, at that, for he has plenty of youth, and good looks, and good clothes, and a nice line of gab, and all these matters are given serious consideration by the dolls, especially the youth.

But I cannot figure any doll that Big False Face knows being such a doll as the one The Humming Bird just yanks out the way of the beer truck, and in fact I do not see how any doll whatever can have any truck with a guy as ugly as Big False Face. But then of course Big False Face is now an important guy in the business world, and has plenty of potatoes, and of course potatoes are also something that is taken into consideration by the dolls.

Big False Face is in the brewery business, and he controls a number of breweries in different spots on the Atlantic seaboard, and especially in New Jersey, and the reason The Humming Bird is in Newark, New Jersey, at this time, is because Big False Face gets a very huge idea in connection with these breweries.

It seems that they are breweries that Big False Face takes over during the past ten years when the country is trying to get along without beer, and the plants are laying idle, and Big False Face opens up these plants and puts many guys to work, and turns out plenty of beer, and thus becomes quite a philanthropist in his way, especially to citizens who like their beer, although up to the time he gets going good as a brewer, Big False Face is considered a very humble character, indeed.

He comes from the lower East Side of New York, and he is called Big False Face from the time he is very young, because he has a very large and a very homely kisser, and on this kisser there is always a castor-oil smile that looks as if it is painted on. But this smile is strictly a throw-off, and Big

False Face is often smiling when he is by no means amused at anything, though I must say for him that he is generally a very light-hearted guy.

In his early youth, it is Big False Face's custom to stand chatting with strangers to the city around the railroad stations and ferryboat landings, and smiling very genially at them, and in this way Big False Face learns much about other parts of the country. But it seems that while he is chatting with these strangers, friends of Big False Face search the strangers' pockets, sometimes removing articles from these pockets such as watches, and lucky pieces, and keepsakes of one kind and another, including money.

Of course it is all in fun, but it seems that some of the strangers become greatly annoyed when they find their pockets empty, and go out of their way to mention the matter to the gendarmes. Well, after the gendarmes hear some little mention from strangers about their pockets being searched while they are chatting with a guy with a large, smiling kisser, the gendarmes take to looking around for such a guy.

Naturally, they finally come upon Big False Face, for at the time I am speaking of, it is by no means common to find guys with smiles on their kissers on the lower East Side, and, especially, large smiles. So what happens but Big False Face is sent to college in his youth by the gendarmes, and the place where the college is located is Auburn, New York, where they teach him that it is very, very wrong to smile at strangers while their pockets are being searched.

After Big False Face is in college for several years, the warden sends for him one day and gives him a new suit of clothes, and a railroad ticket, and a few bobs, and plenty of sound advice, and tells him to go back home again, and afterward Big False Face says he is only sorry he can never remember the advice, as he has no doubt it will be of great value to him in his subsequent career.

Well, later on, Big False Face takes a post-graduate course at Ossining, and also at Dannemora, and by the time he is through with all this, he finds that conditions change throughout the country, and that his former occupation is old-fashioned, and by no means genteel, so Big False Face has to think up something else to do. And while he is thinking, he drives a taxicab and has his station in front of the Pekin restaurant on Broadway, which is a real hot spot at this time.

Then one night a sailor off U.S. battleship hires Big False Face to take him riding in Central Park, and it seems that somewhere on this ride the sailor loses his leather containing a month's salary, and he hops out of the taxicab and starts complaining to a gendarme, making quite a mountain out of nothing but a molehill, for anybody knows that if the sailor does not lose his leather in the taxicab he is bound to spend it at ten cents a clip dancing with the dolls in the Flowerland dance hall, or maybe taking boat rides on the lagoon in the park.

Well, Big False Face can see an argument coming up, and rather than argue, he retires from the taxicab business at once, leaving his taxicab right there in the park, and going

over into New Jersey, and Big False Face always says that one of the regrets of his life is he never collects the taxi fare off the sailor.

In New Jersey, Big False Face secures a position with the late Crowbar Connolly, riding loads down out of Canada, and then he is with the late Hands McGovern, and the late Dark Tony de More, and also the late Lanky-lank Watson, and all this time Big False Face is advancing step by step in the business world, for he has a great personality and is well liked by one and all.

Naturally, many citizens are jealous of Big False Face, and sometimes when they are speaking of him they speak of the days of his youth when he is on the whiz, as if this is something against him, but I always say it is very creditable of Big False Face to rise from such a humble beginning to a position of affluence in the business world.

Personally, I consider Big False Face a remarkable character, especially when he takes over the idle breweries, because it is at a time when everybody is going around saying that if they can only have beer everything will be all right. So Big False Face starts turning out beer that tastes very good indeed, and if everything is not all right, it is by no means his fault.

You must remember that at the time he starts turning out his beer, and for years afterward, Big False Face is being most illegal and quite against the law, and I claim that the way he is able to hide several breweries, each covering

maybe half a block of ground, from the gendarmes all these years is practically magical, and proves that what I say about Big False Face being a remarkable character is very true.

Well, when Congress finally gets around to saying that beer is all right again, Big False Face is a well-established, going concern, and has a fair head-start on the old-fashioned brewers who come back into the business again, but Big False Face is smart enough to know that he will be able to keep ahead of them only by great enterprise and industry, because it seems that certain parties are bound and determined to make it tough on the brewers who supply this nation with beer when beer is illegal, such as Big False Face, forgetting all the hardships and dangers that these brewers face through the years to give the American people their beer, and all the bother they are put to in hiding breweries from the gendarmes.

In fact, these certain parties are making it so tough that Big False Face himself has to write twice before he can get permits for his breweries, and naturally this annoys Big False Face no little, as he hates to write letters.

Furthermore, he hears this condition prevails all over the country, so Big False Face gets to thinking things over, and he decides that the thing to do is to organize the independent brewers like himself into an association to protect their interests.

So he calls a meeting in Newark, New Jersey, of all these brewers and this is how it comes that The Humming Bird is

present, for The Humming Bird represents certain interests around Cleveland, Ohio, and furthermore The Humming Bird is personally regarded as a very able young guy when it comes to breweries.

Well, the only reason I am in Newark, New Jersey, at this time is because a guy by the name of Abie Schumtzenheimer is a delegate representing a New York brewery, and this Abie is a friend of mine, and after the meeting lasts three days he sends for me to come over and play pinochle with him because he cannot make heads or tails of what they are all talking about.

And anyway Abie does not care much, because the brewery he represents is going along for nearly twelve years, and is doing all the business it can handle, and any time it fails to do all the business it can handle, Abie will be around asking a lot of people why.

So Abie's brewery does not care if it enters any association or not, but of course Abie cannot disregard an invitation from such a guy as Big False Face. So there he is, and by and by there I am, and in this way I meet up with The Humming Bird, and, after watching the way he goes darting around and about, especially if a doll happens to pop up in his neighbourhood, I can understand why they call him The Humming Bird.

But, personally, I do not mind seeing a young guy displaying an interest in dolls, and, in fact, if a young guy does not display such an interest in dolls, I am apt to figure

there is something wrong with him. And anyway what is the use of being young if a guy does not display an interest in dolls?

Well, there are delegates to the meeting from as far west as Chicago, and most of them seem to be greatly interested in Big False Face's proposition, especially a delegate from South Chicago who keeps trying to introduce a resolution to sue the government for libel for speaking of brewers who supply the nation with beer after prohibition sets in as racket guys and wildcatters.

The reason the meeting lasts so long is partly because Big False Face keeps making motions for recesses so he can do a little entertaining, for if there is one thing Big False Face loves, it is to entertain, but another reason is that not all the delegates are willing to join Big False Face's association, especially certain delegates who are operating in Pennsylvania.

These delegates say it is nothing but a scheme on the part of Big False Face to nab the business on them, and in fact it seems that there is much resentment among these delegates against Big False Face, and especially on the part of a guy by the name of Cheeks Sheracki, who comes from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and I wish to state that if there is one guy in the United States I will not care to have around resenting me it is Cheeks Sheracki, for nobody knows how many guys Cheeks cools off in his time, not even himself.

But Big False Face does not seem to notice anybody resenting him and he is putting on entertainment for the delegates right and left, including a nice steak dinner on the evening of the day I am speaking of, and it is at this dinner that I state to Big False Face that I hear he is taking The Humming Bird out in society.

'Yes,' Big False Face says, 'I am going to take The Humming Bird to call on the brakeman's daughter.'

Well, when I hear this, I wish to say I am somewhat surprised, because the brakeman's daughter is nothing but a practical joke, and, furthermore, it is a practical joke that is only for rank suckers, and The Humming Bird does not look to be such a sucker to me.

In fact, when Big False Face speaks of the brakeman's daughter, I take a gander at The Humming Bird figuring to see some expression on his kisser that will show he knows what the brakeman's daughter is, but instead The Humming Bird is only looking quite eager, and then I get to thinking about what he tells me in the afternoon about Big False Face taking him to see a doll who is daffy to meet him, and I can see that Big False Face is working on him with the brakeman's daughter for some time.

And I also get to thinking that a lot of smarter guys than The Humming Bird will ever be, no matter how smart he gets, fall for the brakeman's daughter joke, including Big False Face himself. In fact, Big False Face falls for it in the spring of 1928 at Hot Springs, Arkansas, and ever since it is

his favourite joke, and it becomes part of his entertainment of all visitors to Newark, New Jersey, unless of course they happen to be visitors who are jerry to the brakeman's daughter into quite a well-known institution in Newark, New Jersey, and the way the brakeman's daughter joke goes is as follows:

The idea is Big False Face picks out some guy that he figures is a little doll-dizzy, and the way Big False Face can rap to a doll-dizzy guy is really quite remarkable.

Then he starts telling this guy about the brakeman's daughter, who is the most beautiful doll that ever steps in shoe leather, to hear Big False Face tell it. In fact, I once hear Big False Face telling a sucker about how beautiful the brakeman's daughter is, and I find myself wishing to see her, although of course I know there is no such thing as the brakeman's daughter.

Furthermore, everybody around Big False Face starts putting in a boost for the brakeman's daughter, stating to the sucker that she is so lovely that guys are apt to go silly just looking at her. But it seems that the brakeman's daughter has a papa who is a brakeman on the Central, and who is the orneriest guy in the world when it comes to his daughter, and who will not let anybody get close enough to her to hand her a slice of fruit cake.

In fact, this brakeman is so ornery he will shoot you setting if he catches you fooling around his daughter, the way Big False Face and other citizens of Newark, New Jersey, state

the situation to the sucker, and everybody is afraid of the brakeman, including guys who are not supposed to be afraid of anything in this world.

But it seems that Big False Face is acquainted with the brakeman's daughter, and knows the nights the brakeman has to be out on his run, and on these nights the brakeman's daughter is home alone, and on such a night Big False Face occasionally calls on her, and sometimes takes a friend. But Big False Face and everybody else says that it is a dangerous proposition, because if the brakeman ever happens to come home unexpectedly and find callers with his daughter, he is pretty sure to hurt somebody.

Well, the chances are the sucker wishes to call on the brakeman's daughter, no matter what, especially as Big False Face generally lets on that the brakeman's daughter sees the sucker somewhere and is very anxious to meet him, just as he lets on to The Humming Bird, so finally some night Big Falsy takes the sucker to the house where the brakeman's daughter lives, making their approach to the house very roundabout, and mysterious, and sneaky.

Then the minute Big Falsy knocks on the door, out pops a guy from somewhere roaring at them in a large voice, and Big False Face yells that it is the brakeman's daughter's papa himself, and starts running, telling the sucker to follow, although as a rule this is by no means necessary. And when the sucker starts running, he commences to hear shots, and naturally he figures that the old brakeman is popping at him with a Betsy, but what he really hears is incandescent light

bulbs going off around him and sometimes they hit him if the bulb-thrower has good control.

Now, the house Big False Face generally uses is an old empty residence pretty well out in a suburb of Newark, New Jersey, and it sits away off by itself in a big yard near a piece of woods, and when he starts running, Big False Face always runs into this woods, and naturally the sucker follows him. And pretty soon Big False Face loses the sucker in the woods, and doubles back and goes on down-town and leaves the sucker wandering around in the woods for maybe hours.

Then when the sucker finally makes his way back to his hotel, he always finds many citizens gathered to give him the ha-ha, and to make him buy refreshments for one and all, and the sucker tries to make out that he is greatly amused himself, although the chances are he is so hot you can fry an egg on any part of him.

The biggest laugh that Big False Face ever gets out of the brakeman's daughter joke is the time he leaves a guy from Brooklyn by the name of Rocco Scarpati in the woods one cold winter night, and Rocco never does find his way out, and freezes as stiff as a starched shirt. And of course Big False Face has quite a time explaining to Rocco's Brooklyn friends that Rocco is not cooled off by other means than freezing.

Well, now the way I tell it, you say to yourself how can anybody be sucker enough to fall for such a plant as this? But Big False Face's record with the brakeman's daughter

joke in Newark, New Jersey, includes a congressman, a justice of the peace, three G-guys, eighteen newspaper scribes, five prize fighters, and a raft of guys from different parts of the country, who are such guys as the ordinary citizen will hesitate about making merry with.

In fact, I hear Big False Face is putting the feel on Cheeks Sheracki with reference to the brakeman's daughter until he finds out Cheeks knows this joke as well as he does himself, and then Big False Face discovers The Humming Bird, and no one is talking stronger for the brakeman's daughter with The Humming Bird than Cheeks.

Well, anyway, along about nine o'clock on the night in question, Big False Face tells The Humming Bird that the brakeman is now well out on his run on the Central so they get in Big False Face's car and start out, and I notice that, as they get in the car, Big False Face gives The Humming Bird a quick fanning, as Big False Face does not care to take chances on a sucker having that certain business on him.

The Humming Bird is all sharpened up for this occasion, and furthermore he is quite excited, and one and all are telling him what a lucky guy he is to get to call on the brakeman's daughter, but anybody can see from the way The Humming Bird acts that he feels that it is really the brakeman's daughter who is having the luck.

It seems that Cheeks Sheracki and a couple of his guys from Philadelphia go out to the house in advance to heave the incandescent bulbs and do the yelling, and personally I sit

up playing pinochle with Abie Schumtzenheimer waiting to hear what comes off, although Abie says it is all great foolishness, and by no means worthy of grown guys. But Abie admits he will be glad to see the brakeman's daughter himself, if she is as beautiful as Big False Face claims.

Well, when they come within a couple of blocks of the empty house in the suburbs of Newark, New Jersey, Big False Face tells his driver, a guy by the name of Ears Acosta, who afterwards informs me on several points in this transaction, to pull up and wait there, and then Big False Face and The Humming Bird get out of the car and Big False Face leads the way up the street and into the yard.

This yard is filled with big trees and shrubbery, but the moon is shining somewhat, and it is easy enough to make out objects around and about, but there are no lights in the house, and it is so quiet you can hear your watch tick in your pocket, if you happen to have a watch.

Well, Big False Face has The Humming Bird by the coat sleeve, and he tiptoes through the gate and up a pathway, and The Humming Bird tiptoes right with him, and every now and then Big False Face stops and listens, and the way Big False Face puts this on is really wonderful, because he does it so often he can get a little soul into his work.

Now, The Humming Bird has plenty of moxie from all I hear, but naturally seeing the way Big False Face is acting makes him feel a little nervous, because The Humming Bird knows that Big False Face is as game as they come, and he

figures that any situation that makes Big False Face act as careful as all this must be a very dangerous situation, indeed.

When they finally get up close to the house, The Humming Bird sees there is a porch, and Big False Face tiptoes up on this porch, still leading The Humming Bird by the coat sleeve, and then Big False Face knocks softly on the door, and lets out a little low whistle, and, just as The Humming Bird is commencing to notice that this place seems to be somewhat deserted, all of a sudden a guy comes busting around the corner of the house.

This guy is making a terrible racket, what with yelling and swearing, and among other things he yells as follows:

'Ah-ha!' the guy yells, 'now I have you dead to rights!'

And with this, something goes pop, and then something goes pop-pop, and Big False Face says to The Humming Bird like this:

'My goodness,' Big False Face says, 'it is the brakeman! Run!' he says. 'Run for your life!'

Then Big False Face turns and runs, and The Humming Bird is about to turn and run with him because The Humming Bird figures if a guy like Big False Face can afford to run there can be no percentage in standing still himself, but before he can move the door of the house flies open and The Humming Bird feels himself being yanked inside the joint, and he puts up his dukes and gets ready to do

the best he can until he is overpowered. Then he hears a doll's voice going like this:

'Sh-h-h-h!' the doll's voice goes. 'Sh-h-h-h!'

So The Humming Bird sh-h-h-h's, and the racket goes on outside a while with a guy still yelling, and much pop-pop-popping away. Then the noise dies out, and all is still, and by the moonlight that is coming through a window on which there is no curtain, The Humming Bird can see a lot of furniture scattered around and about the room, but some of it is upside-down and none of it is arranged in any order.

Furthermore, The Humming Bird can now also see that the doll who pulls him into the house and gives him the sh-h-h-h is nobody but the black-haired doll he hauls out of the way of the beer truck in the afternoon, and naturally The Humming Bird is somewhat surprised to see her at this time.

Well, the black-haired doll smiles at The Humming Bird and finally he forgets his nervousness to some extent, and in fact drops his dukes which he still has up ready to sell his life dearly, and by and by the black-haired doll says to him like this:

'I recognize you through the window in the moonlight,' she says. 'As I see you coming up on the porch, I also see some parties lurking in the shrubbery, and,' she says, 'I have a feeling they are seeking to do you harm, so I pull you inside the house. I am glad to see you again,' she says.

Well, Big False Face does not show up in his accustomed haunts to laugh at the joke on The Humming Bird, but Ears Acosta returns with disquieting news such as causes many citizens to go looking for Big False Face, and they find him face downward on the path just inside the gateway, and when they turn him over the old castor-oil smile is still on his kisser, and even larger than ever, as if Big False Face is greatly amused by some thought that hits him all of a sudden.

And Big False Face is extremely dead when they find him, as it seems that some of the incandescent bulbs that go pop-popping around him are really sawed-off shotguns, and it also seems that Cheeks Sheracki and his guys from Philadelphia are such careless shots that they tear off half the gate with their slugs, so it is pretty lucky for The Humming Bird that he is not running with Big False Face for this gate at the moment, or in fact anywhere near him.

And back in the house, while they are lugging Big False Face away, The Humming Bird and the black-haired doll are sitting on an overturned sofa in the parlour with the moonlight streaming through the window on which there is no curtain and spilling all over them as The Humming Bird is telling her how much he loves her, and how he hopes and trusts she feels the same towards him, for they are young, and it is spring in Newark, New Jersey.

'Well,' The Humming Bird says, 'so you are the brakeman's daughter, are you? Well,' he says, 'I wish to state that they do not overboost you a nickel's worth when they tell me you are

the most beautiful doll in all this world, and I am certainly tickled to find you.'

'But how do you learn my new address so soon?' the black-haired doll says. 'We just move in here this morning, although,' she says, 'I guess it is a good thing for you we do not have time to put up any window shades. And what do you mean,' the black-haired doll says, 'by calling me the brakeman's daughter? My papa is one of the oldest and best known conductors anywhere on the Erie,' she says.

Cemetery Bait

One pleasant morning in early April, a character by the name of Gentleman George wakes up to find himself in a most embarrassing predicament.

He wakes up to find himself in a cell in the state penitentiary at Trenton, N.J., and while a cell in a state penitentiary is by no means a novelty to George, and ordinarily will cause him no confusion whatever, the trouble is this particular cell is what is known as the death house.

Naturally, George is very self-conscious about this, as it is only the second time in his life he ever finds himself in such a house, and the first time is so far back in his youth that it

leaves scarcely any impression on him, especially as he is commuted out of it in less than sixty days.

Well, George sits there on the side of the cot in his cell this pleasant April morning, thinking what a humiliating circumstance this is to a proud nature such as his, when all of a sudden he remembers that on the morrow he is to be placed in Mister Edison's rocking-chair in the room adjoining his cell, and given a very severe shock in the seat of his breeches.

On remembering this George becomes very thoughtful to be sure, and sighs to himself as follows: Heigh-ho, heigh-ho, heigh-ho. And then he sends for me to come and see him, although George is well aware that I have no use for penitentiaries, or their environs, and consider them a most revolting spectacle.

In fact, I have such a repugnance for penitentiaries that I never even glance at them in passing, because I am afraid that peepings may be catchings, but of course in a situation such as this I can scarcely deny the call of an old friend.

They let me talk to George through the bars of his cell, and naturally I am somewhat perturbed to observe him in this plight, although I can see that his surroundings are clean and sanitary, and that the hacks seem kindly disposed towards him, except one big doorknob who is inclined to be somewhat churlish because George just beats him in a game of two-handed pinochle.

Furthermore, I can see that George is in pretty fair physical condition, although a little stouter than somewhat, and that he looks as if he is getting some rest.

He is at this time about forty-five years of age, is known far and wide as the handsomest and most genteel character on Broadway. His brown hair now has some grey in it along the edges, and there are lines of care in his face, and, of course, George is not dressed as fashionably as usual.

In fact, his clothes need pressing, and he can stand a haircut, and a shave, and when I mention this to George he says he understands they are going to give him all the haircutting he requires before morning, and maybe a close shave, too.

In the old days, Gentleman George is very prominent in the jewellery trade with Tommy Entrata and his associates, and anybody will tell you that Tommy and his crowd are the best in the country, because they pursue strictly business methods, and are very high-principled.

They generally work with a character by the name of Lou Adolia, who is a private fuzz often employed by big insurance companies that make a speciality of insuring jewellery for wealthy female parties, a fuzz being a way of saying a detective, although the chances are Lou Adolia cannot really find his hip pocket with both hands.

But when Tommy Entrata and his associates come into possession of jewellery belonging to these wealthy female

parties, they notify Lou Adolia, and he arranges with the insurance companies to pay a certain sum for the return of the merchandise, and no beefs, and everybody is satisfied, especially the insurance companies, because, of course, if they do not get the goods back, the companies will have to pay the full amount of the insurance.

As Tommy Entrata is generally very reasonable in his fees on jewellery that comes into his possession, it really is a most economical arrangement for the insurance companies, and for everybody else concerned, and it is also very nice for Lou Adolia, as he always gets a reward from the companies, and sometimes a piece of what Tommy Entrata collects.

Then a piece always goes to the stout fellow in the city in which Tommy Entrata and his associates are operating, the stout fellow being the local fix, because, of course, you understand that in a business as large as this carried on by Tommy Entrata it is necessary to take care of all angles. So the stout fellow looks after the local law to see that it does not interfere with Tommy Entrata any more than is absolutely necessary.

To tell the truth, when Tommy Entrata and his associates go into a town, it is generally as well-organized from top to bottom as Standard Oil, and Tommy not only has a complete roster of all the local jewellery owners, and what they are insured for, from Lou Adolia, but also a few diagrams as to where this jewellery is located, and Tommy never fails to make ample provision for one and all in the town who may be concerned before he turns a wheel. In fact, I hear that in a

spot up in the North-west Tommy once even declares the mayor and the commissioner of public safety in on one of his transactions, just out of the goodness of his heart, and this unselfishness in his business operations makes Tommy highly respected far and wide.

Anyway, Gentleman George is one of Tommy Entrata's experts in the matter of coming into possession of jewellery, and Tommy appreciates George no little, as George is strictly a lone hand at his work, and he never carries that thing on him, and considers all forms of violence most revolting, so he never gets into trouble, or at least not much.

I am telling you all this so you will understand that Tommy Entrata conducts his business in a high-class, conservative manner, and personally I consider him a great boon to a community, because he teaches people the value of insurance, and now I will return to Gentleman George in his cell in the death house in Trenton, N.J.

'Well,' George says, 'there you are, and here I am, and you are the only friend that comes to see me since the judge mentions the date that now becomes of some importance in my life, and which is in fact to-morrow. And now I wish to tell you a story, which will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and the object of this story is to show that I once perform a great service to the public.'

At this, I become uneasy, because I am afraid it may be a tedious story, and I do not care to remain in such surroundings listening to reminiscence, so I request George

to epitomize as much as possible, and to omit all reference to low characters and sordid situations, and then George states as follows, and to wit, viz.:

In the winter of 1935, I am going southward by train on business bent, and the reason I do not reveal my destination at this time is because I do not wish to be recalled as ever hollering copper, even on a city, but I will say that it is a certain winter resort spot about as far below the Mason & Dixon's line as you can get before you start swimming, and a very pleasant spot it is, at that.

The first night out on the train, I go into the diner and partake of a fish that is on the menu, because the steward of the diner weighs in with a strong shill for this fish, and the next thing I know I am back in my compartment as sick as anything, and maybe a little bit sicker.

To tell the truth, I am so sick that I think I am going to pass away, and this thought disturbs me no little, as Tommy Entrata is looking forward to my arrival with keen interest, and I know that he is apt to take my passing away as a personal affront.

Well, while I am lying in my berth as sick as stated, all of a sudden the door of my compartment opens, and a pair of specs and a short, scrubby, grey tash appear, and behind the specs and the tash is a stern-looking character of maybe fifty-odd who speaks to me in a gruff voice, as follows:

'See here, now,' he says, 'what is all this runting and grunting about? Are you sick?'

'Well,' I say, 'if I am not sick, I will do until an invalid comes along.'

And then I start retching again, and in between retches, I mention the dining-car fish, and I tell the stern-looking character that if he will kindly get the dining-car steward to step into my compartment for just one minute I will die happy.

'You speak great nonsense,' the stern-looking character says. 'You are not going to die, although,' he says, 'who knows but what you may be better off if you do? Not enough people know when to die. What ails you is ptomaine poisoning, and I will take charge of this situation myself because I will be unable to sleep in this car with you scrooning and mooning all night.

'I once get the same thing myself in Gloucester, Mass.' he says. 'You will expect fish to be all right in Gloucester, Mass. If I remember,' he says, 'it is mackerel in my case.'

Then he rings for the porter, and pretty soon he has the train secretary, and the Pullman conductor, and even a couple of other passengers running in and out of my compartment getting him this, and that, and one thing and another, and dosing me with I do not know what, and sick as I am, I can see that this stern-looking character is accustomed to having people step around when he speaks.

Well, for a while I am thinking that the best break I can get is to pass away without any further lingering; then, by and by, I commence feeling better, and finally I doze off to sleep. But I seem to remember the stern-looking character mentioning that he is going to the same place that I am, and that he is just returning from a hunting-trip in Canada, and I also seem to recall him telling me what a wonderful shot he is with any kind of fire-arms.

Afterward, however, I figure I must dream all this because the next morning the stern-looking character just glances in on me once and asks how I feel in a tone of voice that indicates he does not care much one way or the other, and after this I do not see hide or hair of him, and I can see that he does not mean to make a friendship of the matter.

In fact, when I am getting off the train at my destination, I suddenly remember that I do not even know the stern-looking character's name, and I am sorry about this, as so few people in the world are ever good to me that I wish to cherish the names of those who are. But, of course, I now have no time for sentiment, as duty calls me, and I do not bother to inquire around and about with reference to the stern-looking character.

I telephone Tommy Entrata, and make a meet with him for dinner in a night-club that is called by the name of the Bath and Sail Club, although there is no bathing connected with it whatever, and no sailing either, for that matter, and while I am waiting there for Tommy, I observe at another table the most beautiful Judy I see in many a day, and you know very

well that few better judges of beauty ever live than yours sincerely, G. George.

She is young, and has hair the colour of straw, and she is dressed in a gorgeous white evening gown, and she has plenty of junk on her in the way of diamonds, and she seems to be waiting for someone and I find myself regretting that it is not me. I am so impressed by her that I call Emil, the head-waiter, and question him, because Emil is an old friend of mine, and I know he always has a fund of information on matters such as this.

'Emil,' I say, 'who is the lovely pancake over there by the window?'

'Cemetery bait,' Emil says, so I know he means she is married, and has a husband who is selfish about her, and naturally I cast no sheep's eyes in her direction, especially as Tommy Entrata comes in about now and takes me to a private room where we have a nice dinner, and discuss my business in this city.

It is in pursuit of this business, at the hour of 1 a.m. on a warm Sunday morning, that I am making a call at the residence of a character by the name of Colonel Samuel B. Venus, and am in the boudoir of his ever-loving wife, and a beautiful room it is, at that, with the windows on one side looking out over the sea waves, and the windows on the other side overlooking a patio of whispering palm-trees.

The moon is shining down on this scene, and it is so lovely that I stand at the front windows a few moments looking out over the water before I start seeking the small can, or safe, that I know is concealed in a clothes closet in the room unless the butler in the Venus house is telling a terrible falsehood and accepting money from us under false pretences for this information and for admitting me to the premises.

Of course, Colonel Samuel B. Venus's ever-loving wife is not present in her boudoir at this hour, and neither is Colonel Samuel B. Venus, and in fact I afterward learn that the only way Colonel Samuel B. Venus can get in there is on a writ of habeas corpus, but this has nothing to do with my story.

My information is that Colonel Samuel B. Venus is a very wealthy character of maybe sixty years of age, come next grass, and that his ever-loving wife is less than half of that, and has some of the finest jewellery in this country, including pearls, diamonds, star rubies, emeralds, and I do not know what all else, and I am given to understand that Colonel Samuel B. Venus leaves the night before on a fishing-trip, and that Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus is out somewhere wearing only a couple of pounds of her jewels, so the rest of her stuff is bound to be in the little can in her boudoir.

Well, the little can is in the closet just where the butler reports, and I observe that it is such a can as I will be able to open with a toothpick if necessary, although, of course, I bring along my regular can-opener, which is a tool for cutting open safes that I personally invent, as you perhaps

remember, although I never think to get a patent on it from the government, and I am about to start operations when I hear voices, and two characters, male and female, enter the boudoir.

So there I am in the closet among a lot of dresses and coats, and all this and that, and, what is more, I leave the closet door open a little when I go in, as I figure I may require a little air, and I am now afraid to close the door for fear of making a noise, and the best I can make of this situation is that I am a gone gosling. To tell the truth, it is one of the few times in my life that I regret I do not have that thing on me, just for self-defence.

I can see right away from the way she talks that the female character must be Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus, but the character with her is by no means her husband, and naturally I am greatly scandalized to think that a married broad will bring a party not her husband into her boudoir with her at such an hour, and I am wondering what on earth the world is coming to.

But although I listen keenly, there seems to be no goings-on, and in fact all they are doing is talking, so I figure the character with Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus must be a character without any imagination whatever.

Finally, when I judge from their conversation that they are looking at the view of the sad sea waves, I cop a quick peek, and I see that Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus is nobody but the blonde I admire at the Bath and Sail Club, and while this

surprises me no little, it does not surprise me half as much as the fact that the character with her is a party by the name of Count Tomaso, who is known far and wide as a most unworthy character. In fact, Count Tomaso is regarded in some circles as a 22-carat fink, a fink being a character who is lower than a mudcat's vest pocket.

He is a small, slim-built character, with dark hair greased down on his head, and he wears a monocle, and seems very foreign in every respect. In fact, Count Tomaso claims to belong to the Italian nobility, but he is no more a count than I am, and to tell the truth, he is nothing but a ginzo out of Sacramento, and his right name is Carfarelli.

For a matter of twenty years or more, this Count Tomaso is on the socket, which is a way of saying his dodge is blackmail, and of course there is little or no class to such a dodge as this. He generally pitches to foolish old married Judys, and gets them wedged in with letters, and one thing and another, and then puts the shake on them.

Personally, I rarely criticize anybody else's methods of earning a livelihood, but I can never approve of the shake, although I must admit that from what I hear of Count Tomaso, he really is an artist in his line, and can nine those old phlugs in first-class style when he is knuckling.

I only hope and trust that his presence in Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus's boudoir does not mean that Count Tomaso is trespassing in any way upon my affairs, as I can see where this will produce complications, and it is always

my policy to avoid complications, so I remain very quiet, with a firm grip on my can-opener in case Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus or Count Tomaso happens to come to the closet.

But it seems to be nothing but a social visit, as I can hear her getting out some liquor, and after a couple of drinks they begin speaking of nothing much in particular, including the weather. Presently the conversation becomes quite dull, for it is all about love and conversation about love always bores me no little unless I am making the conversation myself, although I can see that Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus is better than a raw hand in conversation of this nature.

I am so bored that I put down my can-opener and am about to doze off among the dresses, when all of a sudden the conversation takes a very unusual turn, to be sure, for Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus says to Count Tomaso like this:

'I know you love me,' she says, 'and I love you madly in return, but what good will it do us? I am married to a character old enough to be my father and, although he does not know it, I hate and despise him. But even if I tell him this, I know he will never give me a divorce, and, besides, if I do get a divorce, he is sure to put me off with a mere pittance. I am bound to him as long as he lives,' she says. 'As long as he lives, Tomaso.'

Well, Count Tomaso says this is certainly a sad state of affairs, and seems to be taking another drink, and she goes on as follows:

'Of course,' she says, 'if he passes away, Tomaso, I will marry you the next day, or anyway' she says, 'as soon as my mourning goes out of style. Then we can go all over the world and enjoy our love, because I know his will leaves me all his vast fortune. I am afraid it is wicked,' she says, 'but sometimes I wish an accident will befall him.'

Now I can see that what is coming off here is that Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus is giving Count Tomaso a hint in a roundabout way to cause an accident to befall Colonel Samuel B. Venus, and thinks I to myself there in the closet, it is a pretty how-do-you-do if such goings-on are tolerated in society circles, and I am glad I am not in society. To tell the truth, I consider Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus's attitude most unbecoming.

Well, they converse at some length about various forms of accidents that they hear of, but they seem unable to arrive at any definite conclusion, and I am almost sorry I am unable to join in the discussion and offer a few original ideas of my own, when Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus says:

'Well,' she says, 'we are sailing next week on the *Castilla* for New York, and you can come on the same ship. New York is a better place for accidents than down here, because they are not apt to attract so much attention there. But, Tomaso,' she says, 'be very careful the Colonel does not see you on the trip, as he has been hearing things here, and he is terribly jealous, and has a violent temper, and, furthermore, he always has deadly weapons around, and he claims he is a wonderful marksman.

'Oh, Tomaso,' she says, 'is it not awful to be yoked to an old character who thinks of nothing but hunting, and fishing, and business, when I love you so much?'

Well, Tomaso says it is, indeed, and does she have a few dibs on her to tide him over the week-end, and it seems she has, and then there is a little off-hand billing and cooing that I consider very bad taste in her under her own roof, and finally they go out of the boudoir.

As soon as they depart, I turn to my own business of opening the little can and removing the jewellery, which I deliver to Tommy Entrata, who gives it to Lou Adolia, and this is the time that Lou Adolia gets eighty thousand dollars from the insurance companies for the return of the goods, and then disappears with all the sugar, and without as much as saying, aye, yes or no to anybody.

But I am getting ahead of my story.

A couple of days later, I am reclining on the beach with Tommy Entrata, taking a little sun for my complexion, when who comes along in a bathing-suit which displays a really remarkable shape but Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus, and who is with her but the stern-looking character who doctors me up on the train, and at first I have half a notion to jump up and say hello to him and thank him for his kindness to me about the fish, but he looks right through me as if he never sees me before in his life, and I can see that he does not remember me, or if he does, he does not care to make anything of it.

So I do not give him a blow, because the way I look at it, the fewer people you know in this world, the better you are off. But I ask Tommy Entrata who the stern-looking character is, and I am somewhat surprised when Tommy says:

'Why,' he says, 'he is Colonel Samuel B. Venus, the party you knock off the other night, but,' Tommy says, 'let us not speak of that now. Colonel Samuel B. Venus is a most irascible character, and he is making quite a chirp about matters, and it is very fortunate for us that he and his wife are sailing for New York, because the stout fellow is getting nervous about the outcry.

'By the way,' Tommy says, 'I do not wish to seem inhospitable in suggesting your departure from these pleasant scenes, but it may be a good idea for you to take it on the Jesse Owens until the beef is chilled. There are many nightingales in these parts,' he says, 'and they will sing to the law on very slight provocation, for instance such a character as Count Tomaso. I notice him around here nuzzling up to Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus, and while the chances are he is on a business mission of his own, Count Tomaso knows you, and it is always my opinion that he is a singer, at heart.'

Well, I do not mention the incident in Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus's boudoir to Tommy Entrata, because in the first place I do not consider it any of his business, and in the second place I know Tommy is not apt to be interested in such a matter, but I get to thinking about the conversation between Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus and Count Tomaso,

and I also get to thinking about Colonel Samuel B. Venus being so nice to me in connection with the bad fish.

And thinks I, as long as I must take my departure, anyway, a little sea voyage may be beneficial to my health, and I will go on the *Castilla* myself, and will look up Count Tomaso and admonish him that I will hold him personally responsible if any accident happens to Colonel Samuel B. Venus, as I feel that it is only fair to do what I can to discharge my debt of gratitude to Colonel Samuel B. Venus concerning the fish.

So when the *Castilla* sails a few days later, I am a passenger, and, furthermore, I have a nice cabin on the same deck as Colonel Samuel B. Venus and his ever-loving wife, because I always believe in travelling with the best people, no matter what.

I see Colonel Samuel B. Venus, and I also see Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus on the first day out, and I observe that Colonel Samuel B. Venus is looking sterner than ever, and also that Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus is growing lovelier by the hour, but never do I see Count Tomaso, although I am pretty sure he does not miss the boat.

I figure that he is taking Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus's advice about keeping out of sight of Colonel Samuel B. Venus.

I do not bother to go looking for Count Tomaso on the *Castilla* to admonish him about Colonel Samuel B. Venus, because I figure I am bound to catch up with him getting off

the boat in New York, and that in the meantime Colonel Samuel B. Venus is safe from accident, especially as it comes up stormy at sea after we are a few hours out, and Colonel Samuel B. Venus and his ever-loving wife seem to be keeping close to their cabin, and in fact so is everybody else.

Well, the storm keeps getting worse, and it is sleety and cold all around and about, and the sea is running higher than somewhat, and now one night off the Jersey coast when I am sleeping as peacefully as anything, I am awakened by a great to-do and it seems that the *Castilla* is on fire.

Naturally, I do not care to be toasted in my cabin, so I don my clothes, and pop out into the passageway and start for the nearest exit, when I remember that in moments of confusion many characters, male and female, are apt to forget articles of one kind and another that may come in handy to somebody such as me later on, for instance bits of jewellery, and other portable merchandise.

So I try various doors as I go along the passageway, and all of them are open and unoccupied, as the *Castilla* is an old-time vessel with cabin doors that lock with keys, and not with snap locks, and, just as I suspect, I find numerous odds and ends in the way of finger-rings, and bracelets and clips and pins and necklaces, and watches, and gold cigarette-cases, and even a few loose bundles of ready scratch, so I am very glad, indeed, that I am gifted with foresight.

Finally I come to one door that seems to be locked, and I remember that this is the cabin occupied by Colonel Samuel

B. Venus and his ever-loving wife, and after first knocking at the door and receiving no reply, I figure they hastily depart and carelessly lock the door after them, and I also figure that I am bound to garner something of more than ordinary value there.

So I kick the door in, and who is in the cabin on a bed, all trussed up like a goose, with a towel tied across his mouth to keep him from hollering out loud, but Colonel Samuel B. Venus, in person.

Naturally, I am somewhat surprised at this spectacle, and also somewhat embarrassed to have Colonel Samuel B. Venus find me kicking in his door, but of course this is no time for apologies, so I take a quick swivel about the cabin to see if there are any articles lying around that I may be able to use. I am slightly disappointed to note that there appears to be nothing, and I am about to take my departure, when all of a sudden I remember my debt of gratitude to Colonel Samuel B. Venus, and I realize that it will be most unkind to leave him in this predicament to be barbecued like a steer without being able to move hand or foot.

So I out with my pocket chiv, and cut him loose, and I also remove the towel, and as soon as he can talk, Colonel Samuel B. Venus issues a statement to me, in a most severe tone of voice, as follows:

'They try to murder me,' he says. 'My own wife, Cora, and a character in a white polo coat with a little cap to match. When the alarm of fire is sounded,' Colonel Samuel B. Venus

says, 'she starts screaming, and he comes banging up against our door, and she unlocks it and lets him in before I have time to think, and then he knocks me down with something, I do not know what.'

'The chances are,' I say, 'it is a blunt instrument.'

'You may be right,' Colonel Samuel B. Venus says. 'Anyway, after he knocks me down, my own wife, Cora, picks up one of my shoes and starts belting me over the head with the heel, and then she helps the character in the polo coat and the little cap to match tie me up as you find me.'

'It is a scurvy trick,' I say.

'I am half unconscious,' Colonel Samuel B. Venus says, 'but I remember hearing my own wife, Cora, remark that the fire is a wonderful break for them, and will save them a lot of bother in New York. And then before they leave, she hits me another belt on the head with the shoe. I fear,' Colonel Samuel B. Venus says, 'that my own wife, Cora, is by no means the ever-loving helpmeet I think. In fact,' he says, 'I am now wondering about the overdose of sleeping powders she gives me in London, England, in 1931, and about the bomb in my automobile in Los Angeles, Cal., in 1933.'

'Well, well, well,' I say, 'let us let bygones be bygones, and get off this tub, as it seems to be getting hotter than a ninth-inning finish around here.'

But Colonel Samuel B. Venus remains very testy about the incident he just describes, and he fumbles around under a pillow on the bed on which I find him, and outs with that thing, and opens the cylinder as if to make sure it is loaded, and says to me like this:

'I will shoot him down like a dog,' he says. 'I mean the character in the white polo coat and the little cap to match. He undoubtedly leads my poor little wife, Cora, astray in this, although,' he says, 'I do not seem to recall him anywhere in the background of the overdose and the bomb matters. But she is scarcely more than a child and does not know right from wrong. He is the one who must die,' Colonel Samuel B. Venus says. 'I wonder who he is?' he says.

Well, of course I know Colonel Samuel B. Venus must be talking about Count Tomaso, but I can see that Count Tomaso is a total stranger to him, and while I am by no means opposed to Colonel Samuel B. Venus's sentiments with reference to Count Tomaso, I do not approve of his spirit of forgiveness towards Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus, because I figure that as long as she is around and about, Colonel Samuel B. Venus will always be in danger of accidents.

But I do not feel that this is a time for argument, so I finally get him to go up on the deck with me, and as soon as we are on deck, Colonel Samuel B. Venus leaves me and starts running every which way as if he is looking for somebody.

There seems to be some little agitation on deck, what with smoke and flame coming out of the *Castilla* amidships, and many characters, male and female, running up and down, and around and about, and small children crying.

Some of the crew are launching lifeboats, and then getting into these boats themselves, and pulling away from the burning ship without waiting for any passengers, which strikes me as most discourteous on the part of the sailors and which alarms many passengers so they start chucking themselves over the rail into the sea trying to catch up with the boats.

Well, this scene is most distasteful to me, so I retire from the general mêlée, and go looking elsewhere about the ship, figuring I may find an opportunity to ease myself quietly into a boat before all the seats are taken by sailors, and finally I come upon a group trying to launch a big life raft over the rail, and about this time I observe Colonel Samuel B. Venus standing against the rail with that thing in his hand, and peering this way and that.

And then I notice a boat pulling away from the ship, and in the stern of the boat I see a character in a white polo coat, and a little cap to match, and I call the attention of Colonel Samuel B. Venus to same.

The boat is so overcrowded that it is far down in the water, but the waves, which are running very high, are carrying it away in long lunges, and it is fully one hundred yards off, and is really visible to the naked eye by the light of the

flames from the *Castilla* only when it rises a moment to the top of a wave, and Colonel Samuel B. Venus looks for some time before he sees what I wish him to see.

'I spot him now,' he says. 'I recognize the white polo coat and the little cap to match.'

And with this, he ups with that thing and goes tooty-toot-toot out across the water three times, and the last I see of the white polo coat and the little cap to match they are folding up together very gently just as a big wave washes the boat off into the darkness beyond the light of the burning ship.

By this time the raft is in the water, and I take Colonel Samuel B. Venus and chuck him down on to the raft, and then I jump after him, and as the raft is soon overcrowded, I give the foot to a female character who is on the raft before anybody else and ease her off into the water.

As this female character disappears in the raging sea, I am not surprised to observe that she is really nobody but Count Tomaso, as I seem to remember seeing Count Tomaso making Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus change clothes with him at the point of a knife.

Well, some of the boats get ashore, and some do not, and in one that does arrive, they find the late Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus, and everybody is somewhat surprised to note that she is in male garments with a white polo coat and a little cap to match.

I wish to call attention to the public service I render in easing Count Tomaso off the raft, because here is a character who is undoubtedly a menace to the sanctity of the American home.

And I take pride in the fact that I discharge my debt of gratitude to Colonel Samuel B. Venus, and it is not my fault that he permits himself to be so overcome by his experience on the ship and on the raft that he turns out to be a raving nut, and never has the pleasure of learning that his aim is still so good that he can put three slugs in a moving target within the span of a baby's hand.

'Why, George,' I say to Gentleman George, 'then you are the victim of a great wrong, and I will see the governor, or somebody, in your behalf at once. They cannot do this to you, when according to your own story, you are not directly connected with the matter of Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus, and it is only a case of mistaken identity, at best.'

'Oh, pshaw!' Gentleman George says. 'They are not taking the severe measures they contemplate with me because of anything that happens to Mrs. Colonel Samuel B. Venus.

'They are vexed with me,' George says, 'because one night I take Lou Adolia's automobile out on the salt meadows near Secaucus, N.J., and burn it to a crisp, and it seems that I forget to remove Lou Adolia first from same.'

'Well, George,' I say, '*bon voyage*.'

'The same to you,' George says, 'and many of them.'

It Comes Up Mud

Personally, I never criticize Miss Beulah Beauregard for breaking her engagement to Little Alfie, because from what she tells me she becomes engaged to him under false pretences, and I do not approve of guys using false pretences on dolls, except, of course, when nothing else will do.

It seems that Little Alfie promises to show Miss Beulah Beauregard the life of Riley following the races with him when he gets her to give up a first-class job displaying her shape to the customers in the 900 Club, although Miss Beulah Beauregard frankly admits that Little Alfie does not say what Riley, and afterward Little Alfie states that he must be thinking of Four-eyes Riley when he makes the promise, and everybody knows that Four-eyes Riley is nothing but a bum, in spades.

Anyway, the life Little Alfie shows Miss Beulah Beauregard after they become engaged is by no means exciting, according to what she tells me, as Little Alfie is always going around the race tracks with one or two crocodiles that he calls race horses, trying to win a few bobs for himself, and generally Little Alfie is broke and

struggling, and Miss Beulah Beauregard says this is no existence for a member of a proud old Southern family such as the Beauregards.

In fact, Miss Beulah Beauregard often tells me that she has half a mind to leave Little Alfie and return to her ancestral home in Georgia, only she can never think of any way of getting there without walking, and Miss Beulah Beauregard says it always makes her feet sore to walk very far, although the only time anybody ever hears of Miss Beulah Beauregard doing much walking is the time she is shell-roaded on the Pelham Parkway by some Yale guys when she gets cross with them.

It seems that when Little Alfie is first canvassing Miss Beulah Beauregard to be his fiancée he builds her up to expect diamonds and furs and limousines and one thing and another, but the only diamond she ever sees is an engagement hoop that Little Alfie gives her as the old convincer when he happens to be in the money for a moment, and it is a very small diamond, at that, and needs a high north light when you look at it.

But Miss Beulah Beauregard treasures this diamond very highly just the same, and one reason she finally breaks off her engagement to Little Alfie is because he borrows the diamond one day during the Hialeah meeting at Miami without mentioning the matter to her, and hocks it for five bobs which he bets on an old caterpillar of his by the name of Governor Hicks to show.

Well, the chances are Miss Beulah Beauregard will not mind Little Alfie's borrowing the diamond so much if he does not take the twenty-five bobs he wins when Governor Hicks drops in there in the third hole and sends it to Colonel Matt Winn in Louisville to enter a three-year-old of his by the name of Last Hope in the Kentucky Derby, this Last Hope being the only other horse Little Alfie owns at this time.

Such an action makes Miss Beulah Beauregard very indignant indeed, because she says a babe in arms will know Last Hope cannot walk a mile and a quarter, which is the Derby distance, let alone run so far, and that even if Last Hope can run a mile and a quarter, he cannot run it fast enough to get up a sweat.

In fact, Miss Beulah Beauregard and Little Alfie have words over this proposition, because Little Alfie is very high on Last Hope and will not stand for anybody insulting this particular horse, not even his fiancée, although he never seems to mind what anybody says about Governor Hicks, and, in fact, he often says it himself.

Personally, I do not understand what Little Alfie sees in Last Hope, because the horse never starts more than once or twice since it is born, and then has a tough time finishing last, but Little Alfie says the fifty G's that Colonel Winn gives to the winner of the Kentucky Derby is just the same as in the jug in his name, especially if it comes up mud on Derby Day, for Little Alfie claims that Last Hope is bred to just naturally eat mud.

Well, Miss Beulah Beauregard says there is no doubt Little Alfie blows his topper, and that there is no percentage in her remaining engaged to a crack-pot, and many citizens put in with her on her statement because they consider entering Last Hope in the Derby very great foolishness, no matter if it comes up mud or what, and right away Tom Shaw offers 1,000 to 1 against the horse in the future book, and everybody says Tom is underlaying the price at that.

Miss Beulah Beauregard states that she is very discouraged by the way things turn out, and that she scarcely knows what to do, because she fears her shape changes so much in the four or five years she is engaged to Little Alfie that the customers at the 900 Club may not care to look at it any more, especially if they have to pay for this privilege, although personally I will pay any reasonable cover charge to look at Miss Beulah Beauregard's shape any time, if it is all I suspect. As far as I can see it is still a very nice shape indeed, if you care for shapes.

Miss Beulah Beauregard is at this time maybe twenty-five or twenty-six, and is built like a first baseman, being tall and rangy. She has hay-coloured hair, and blue eyes, and lots of health, and a very good appetite. In fact, I once see Miss Beulah Beauregard putting on the fried chicken in the Seven Seas Restaurant in a way that greatly astonishes me, because I never knew before that members of proud old Southern families are such hearty eaters. Furthermore, Miss Beulah Beauregard has a very Southern accent, which makes her sound quite cute, except maybe when she is a little excited and is putting the zing on somebody, such as Little Alfie.

Well, Little Alfie says he regrets exceedingly that Miss Beulah Beauregard sees fit to break their engagement, and will not be with him when he cuts up the Derby dough, as he is planning a swell wedding for her at French Lick after the race, and even has a list all made out of the presents he is going to buy her, including another diamond, and now he has all this bother of writing out the list for nothing.

Furthermore, Little Alfie says he is so accustomed to having Miss Beulah Beauregard as his fiancée that he scarcely knows what to do without her, and he goes around with a very sad puss, and is generally quite low in his mind, because there is no doubt that Little Alfie loves Miss Beulah Beauregard more than somewhat.

But other citizens are around stating that the real reason Miss Beulah Beauregard breaks her engagement to Little Alfie is because a guy by the name of Mr. Paul D. Veere is making a powerful play for her, and she does not wish him to know that she has any truck with a character such as Little Alfie, for of course Little Alfie is by no means anything much to look at, and, furthermore, what with hanging out with his horses most of the time, he never smells like any rose geranium.

It seems that this Mr. Paul D. Veere is a New York banker, and he has a little moustache, and plenty of coco-nuts, and Miss Beulah Beauregard meets up with him one morning when she is displaying her shape on the beach at the Roney Plaza for nothing, and it also seems that there is enough of her shape left to interest Mr. Paul D. Veere no little.

In fact, the next thing anybody knows, Mr. Paul D. Veere is taking Miss Beulah Beauregard here and there, and around and about, although at this time Miss Beulah Beauregard is still engaged to Little Alfie, and the only reason Little Alfie does not notice Mr. Paul D. Veere at first is because he is busy training Last Hope to win the Kentucky Derby, and hustling around trying to get a few bobs together every day to stand off the overhead, including Miss Beulah Beauregard, because naturally Miss Beulah Beauregard cannot bear the idea of living in a fleabag, such as the place where Little Alfie resides, but has to have a nice room at the Roney Plaza.

Well, personally, I have nothing against bankers as a class, and in fact I never meet up with many bankers in my life, but somehow I do not care for Mr. Paul D. Veere's looks. He looks to me like a stony-hearted guy, although, of course, nobody ever sees any banker who does not look stony-hearted, because it seems that being bankers just naturally makes them look this way.

But Mr. Paul D. Veere is by no means an old guy, and the chances are he speaks of something else besides horses to Miss Beulah Beauregard, and furthermore he probably does not smell like horses all the time, so nobody can blame Miss Beulah Beauregard for going around and about with him, although many citizens claim she is a little out of line in accepting Mr. Paul D. Veere's play while she is still engaged to Little Alfie. In fact, there is great indignation in some circles about this, as many citizens feel that Miss Beulah Beauregard is setting a bad example to other fiancées.

But after Miss Beulah Beauregard formally announces that their engagement is off, it is agreed by one and all that she has a right to do as she pleases, and that Little Alfie himself gets out of line in what happens at Hialeah a few days later when he finally notices that Miss Beulah Beauregard seems to be with Mr. Paul D. Veere, and on very friendly terms with him, at that. In fact, Little Alfie comes upon Mr. Paul D. Veere in the act of kissing Miss Beulah Beauregard behind a hibiscus bush out near the paddock, and this scene is most revolting to Little Alfie as he never cares for hibiscus, anyway.

He forgets that Miss Beulah Beauregard is no longer his fiancée, and tries to take a punch at Mr. Paul D. Veere, but he is stopped by a number of detectives, who are greatly horrified at the idea of anybody taking a punch at a guy who has as many coco-nuts as Mr. Paul D. Veere, and while they are expostulating with Little Alfie, Miss Beulah Beauregard disappears from the scene and is observed no more in Miami. Furthermore, Mr. Paul D. Veere also disappears, but of course nobody minds this very much, and, in fact, his disappearance is a great relief to all citizens who have fiancées in Miami at this time.

But it seems that before he disappears Mr. Paul D. Veere calls on certain officials of the Jockey Club and weighs in the sacks on Little Alfie, stating that he is a most dangerous character to have loose around a race track, and naturally the officials are bound to listen to a guy who has as many coco-nuts as Mr. Paul D. Veere.

So a day or two later old Cap Duhaine, the head detective around the race track, sends for Little Alfie and asks him what he thinks will become of all the prominent citizens such as bankers if guys go around taking punches at them and scaring them half to death, and Little Alfie cannot think of any answer to this conundrum off-hand, especially as Cap Duhaine then asks Little Alfie if it will be convenient for him to take his two horses elsewhere.

Well, Little Alfie can see that Cap Duhaine is hinting in a polite way that he is not wanted around Hialeah any more, and Little Alfie is a guy who can take a hint as well as the next guy, especially when Cap Duhaine tells him in confidence that the racing stewards do not seem able to get over the idea that some scalawag slips a firecracker into Governor Hicks the day old Governor Hicks runs third, because it seems from what Cap Duhaine says that the stewards consider it practically supernatural for Governor Hicks to run third anywhere, any time.

So there Little Alfie is in Miami, as clean as a jaybird, with two horses on his hands, and no way to ship them to any place where horses are of any account, and it is quite a predicament indeed, and causes Little Alfie to ponder quite some. And the upshot of his pondering is that Little Alfie scrapes up a few bobs here and there, and a few oats, and climbs on Governor Hicks one day and boots him in the slats and tells him to giddyup, and away he goes out of Miami, headed north, riding Governor Hicks and leading Last Hope behind him on a rope.

Naturally, this is considered a most unusual spectacle by one and all who witness it and, in fact, it is the first time anybody can remember a horse owner such as Little Alfie riding one of his own horses off in this way, and Gloomy Gus is offering to lay plenty of 5 to 1 that Governor Hicks never makes Palm Beach with Little Alfie up, as it is well known that the old Governor has bum legs and is half out of wind and is apt to pig it any time.

But it seems that Governor Hicks makes Palm Beach all right with Little Alfie up and going so easy that many citizens are around asking Gloomy for a price against Jacksonville. Furthermore, many citizens are now saying that Little Alfie is a pretty smart guy, at that, to think of such an economical idea, and numerous other horse owners are looking their stock over to see if they have anything to ride up north themselves.

Many citizens are also saying that Little Alfie gets a great break when Miss Beulah Beauregard runs out on him, because it takes plenty of weight off him in the way of railroad fare and one thing and another; but it seems Little Alfie does not feel this way about the matter at all.

It seems that Little Alfie often thinks about Miss Beulah Beauregard as he goes jogging along to the north, and sometimes he talks to Governor Hicks and Last Hope about her, and especially to Last Hope, as Little Alfie always considers Governor Hicks somewhat dumb. Also Little Alfie sometimes sings sad love songs right out loud as he is riding along, although the first time he starts to sing he frightens

Last Hope and causes him to break loose from the lead rope and run away, and Little Alfie is an hour catching him. But after this Last Hope gets so he does not mind Little Alfie's voice so much, except when Little Alfie tries to hit high C.

Well, Little Alfie has a very nice ride, at that, because the weather is fine and the farmers along the road feed him and his horses, and he has nothing whatever to worry about except a few saddle galls, and about getting to Kentucky for the Derby in May, and here it is only late in February, and anyway Little Alfie does not figure to ride any farther than maybe Maryland where he is bound to make a scratch so he can ship from there.

Now, one day Little Alfie is riding along a road through a stretch of piny woods, a matter of maybe ninety-odd miles north of Jacksonville, which puts him in the State of Georgia, when he passes a half-ploughed field on one side of the road near a ramshackly old house and beholds a most unusual scene:

A large white mule hitched to a plough is sitting down in the field and a tall doll in a sunbonnet and a gingham dress is standing beside the mule crying very heartily.

Naturally, the spectacle of a doll in distress, or even a doll who is not in distress, is bound to attract Little Alfie's attention, so he tells Governor Hicks and Last Hope to whoa, and then he asks the doll what is eating her, and the doll looks up at him out of her sunbonnet, and who is this doll but Miss Beulah Beauregard.

Of course Little Alfie is somewhat surprised to see Miss Beulah Beauregard crying over a mule, and especially in a sunbonnet, so he climbs down off of Governor Hicks to inquire into this situation, and right away Miss Beulah Beauregard rushes up to Little Alfie and chucks herself into his arms and speaks as follows:

'Oh, Alfie,' Miss Beulah Beauregard says, 'I am so glad you find me. I am thinking of you day and night, and wondering if you forgive me. Oh, Alfie, I love you,' she says. 'I am very sorry I go away with Mr. Paul D. Veere. He is nothing but a great rapscallion,' she says. 'He promises to make me his ever-loving wife when he gets me to accompany him from Miami to his shooting-lodge on the Altamaha River, twenty-five miles from here, although,' she says, 'I never know before he has such a lodge in these parts.'

'And,' Miss Beulah Beauregard says, 'the very first day I have to pop him with a pot of cold cream and render him half unconscious to escape his advances. Oh, Alfie,' she says, 'Mr. Paul D. Veere's intentions towards me are by no means honourable. Furthermore,' she says, 'I learn he already has an ever-loving wife and three children in New York.'

Well, of course Little Alfie is slightly perplexed by this matter and can scarcely think of anything much to say, but finally he says to Miss Beulah Beauregard like this:

'Well,' he says, 'but what about the mule?'

'Oh,' Miss Beulah Beauregard says, 'his name is Abimelech, and I am ploughing with him when he hauls off and sits down and refuses to budge. He is the only mule we own,' she says, 'and he is old and ornery, and nobody can do anything whatever with him when he wishes to sit down. But,' she says, 'my papa will be very angry because he expects me to get this field all ploughed up by supper-time. In fact,' Miss Beulah Beauregard says, 'I am afraid my papa will be so angry he will give me a whopping, because he by no means forgives me as yet for coming home, and this is why I am shedding tears when you come along.'

Then Miss Beulah Beauregard begins crying again as if her heart will break, and if there is one thing Little Alfie hates and despises it is to see a doll crying, and especially Miss Beulah Beauregard, for Miss Beulah Beauregard can cry in a way to wake the dead when she is going good, so Little Alfie holds her so close to his chest he ruins four cigars in his vest pocket, and speaks to her as follows:

'Tut, tut,' Little Alfie says. 'Tut, tut, tut, tut, tut,' he says. 'Dry your eyes and we will just hitch old Governor Hicks here to the plough and get this field ploughed quicker than you can say scat, because,' Little Alfie says, 'when I am a young squirt, I am the best plougher in Columbia County, New York.'

Well, this idea cheers Miss Beulah Beauregard up no little, and so Little Alfie ties Last Hope to a tree and takes the harness off Abimelech, the mule, who keeps right on sitting down as if he does not care what happens, and puts the

harness on Governor Hicks and hitches Governor Hicks to the plough, and the way the old Governor carries on when he finds out they wish him to pull a plough is really most surprising. In fact, Little Alfie has to get a club and reason with Governor Hicks before he will settle down and start pulling the plough.

It turns out that Little Alfie is a first-class plougher, at that, and while he is ploughing, Miss Beulah Beauregard walks along with him and talks a blue streak, and Little Alfie learns more things from her in half an hour than he ever before suspects in some years, and especially about Miss Beulah Beauregard herself.

It seems that the ramshackly old house is Miss Beulah Beauregard's ancestral home, and that her people are very poor, and live in these piny woods for generations, and that their name is Benson and not Beauregard at all, this being nothing but a name that Miss Beulah Beauregard herself thinks up out of her own head when she goes to New York to display her shape.

Furthermore, when they go to the house it comes out that Miss Beulah Beauregard's papa is a tall, skinny old guy with a goatee, who can lie faster than Little Alfie claims Last Hope can run. But it seems that the old skeezicks takes quite an interest in Last Hope when Little Alfie begins telling him what a great horse this horse is, especially in the mud, and how he is going to win the Kentucky Derby.

In fact, Miss Beulah Beauregard's papa seems to believe everything Little Alfie tells him, and as he is the first guy Little Alfie ever meets up with who believes anything he tells about anything whatever, it is a privilege and a pleasure for Little Alfie to talk to him. Miss Beulah Beauregard also has a mamma who turns out to be very fat, and full of Southern hospitality, and quite handy with a skillet.

Then there is a grown brother by the name of Jeff, who is practically a genius, as he knows how to disguise skimmin's so it makes a person only a little sick when they drink it, this skimmin's being a drink which is made from skimmings that come to the top on boiling sugar cane, and generally it tastes like gasoline, and is very fatal indeed.

Now, the consequences are Little Alfie finds this place very pleasant, and he decides to spend a few weeks there, paying for his keep with the services of Governor Hicks as a plough horse, especially as he is now practically engaged to Miss Beulah Beauregard all over again and she will not listen to him leaving without her. But they have no money for her railroad fare, and Little Alfie becomes very indignant when she suggests she can ride Last Hope on north while he is riding Governor Hicks, and wishes to know if she thinks a Derby candidate can be used for a truck horse.

Well, this almost causes Miss Beulah Beauregard to start breaking the engagement all over again, as she figures it is a dirty crack about her heft, but her papa steps in and says they must remain until Governor Hicks get through with the ploughing anyway, or he will know the reason why. So Little

Alfie stays and he puts in all his spare time training Last Hope and wondering who he can write to for enough dough to send Miss Beulah Beauregard north when the time comes.

He trains Last Hope by walking him and galloping him along the country roads in person, and taking care of him as if he is a baby, and what with this work, and the jog up from Miami, Last Hope fills out very strong and hearty, and anybody must admit that he is not a bad-looking beetle, though maybe a little more leggy than some like to see.

Now, it comes a Sunday, and all day long there is a very large storm with rain and wind that takes to knocking over big trees, and one thing and another, and no one is able to go outdoors much. So late in the evening Little Alfie and Miss Beulah Beauregard and all the Bensons are gathered about the stove in the kitchen drinking skimmin's, and Little Alfie is telling them all over again about how Last Hope will win the Kentucky Derby, especially if it comes up mud, when they hear a hammering at the door.

When the door is opened, who comes in but Mr. Paul D. Veere, sopping wet from head to foot, including his little moustache, and limping so he can scarcely walk, and naturally his appearance nonplusses Miss Beulah Beauregard and Little Alfie, who can never forget that Mr. Paul D. Veere is largely responsible for the saddle galls he gets riding up from Miami.

In fact, several times since he stops at Miss Beulah Beauregard's ancestral home, Little Alfie thinks of Mr. Paul

D. Veere, and every time he thinks of him he is in favour of going over to Mr. Paul D. Veere's shooting-lodge on the Altamaha and speaking to him severely.

But Miss Beulah Beauregard always stops him, stating that the proud old Southern families in this vicinity are somewhat partial to the bankers and other rich guys from the North who have shooting-lodges around and about in the piny woods, and especially on the Altamaha, because these guys furnish a market to the local citizens for hunting guides, and corn liquor, and one thing and another.

Miss Beulah Beauregard says if a guest of the Bensons speaks to Mr. Paul D. Veere severely, it may be held against the family, and it seems that the Benson family cannot stand any more beefs against it just at this particular time. So Little Alfie never goes, and here all of a sudden is Mr. Paul D. Veere right in his lap.

Naturally, Little Alfie steps forward and starts winding up a large right hand with the idea of parking it on Mr. Paul D. Veere's chin, but Mr. Paul D. Veere seems to see that there is hostility afoot, and he backs up against the wall, and raises his hand, and speaks as follows:

'Folks,' Mr. Paul D. Veere says, 'I just go into a ditch in my automobile half a mile up the road. My car is a wreck,' he says, 'and my right leg seems so badly hurt I am just barely able to drag myself here. Now, folks,' he says, 'it is almost a matter of life and death with me to get to the station at Tillinghast in time to flag the Orange Blossom Special. It is

the last train to-night to Jacksonville, and I must be in Jacksonville before midnight so I can hire an aeroplane and get to New York by the time my bank opens at ten o'clock in the morning. It is about ten hours by plane from Jacksonville to New York,' Mr. Paul D. Veere says, 'so if I can catch the Orange Blossom, I will be able to just about make it!'

Then he goes on speaking in a low voice and states that he receives a telephone message from New York an hour or so before at his lodge telling him he must hurry home, and right away afterward, while he is trying to telephone the station at Tillinghast to make sure they will hold the Orange Blossom until he gets there, no matter what, all the telephone and telegraph wires around and about go down in the storm.

So he starts for the station in his car, and just as it looks as if he may make it, his car runs smack-dab into a ditch and Mr. Paul D. Veere's leg is hurt so there is no chance he can walk the rest of the way to the station, and there Mr. Paul D. Veere is.

'It is a very desperate case, folks,' Mr. Paul D. Veere says. 'Let me take your automobile, and I will reward you liberally.'

Well, at this Miss Beulah Beauregard's papa looks at a clock on the kitchen wall and states as follows:

'We do not keep an automobile, neighbour,' he says, 'and anyway,' he says, 'it is quite a piece from here to Tillinghast and the Orange Blossom is due in ten minutes, so I do not

see how you can possibly make it. Rest your hat, neighbour,' Miss Beulah Beauregard's papa says, 'and have some skimmin's, and take things easy, and I will look at your leg and see how bad you are bunged up.'

Well, Mr. Paul D. Veere seems to turn as pale as a pillow as he hears this about the time, and then he says:

'Lend me a horse and buggy,' he says. 'I must be in New York in person in the morning. No one else will do but me,' he says, and as he speaks these words he looks at Miss Beulah Beauregard and then at Little Alfie as if he is speaking to them personally, although up to this time he does not look at either of them after he comes into the kitchen.

'Why, neighbour,' Miss Beulah Beauregard's papa says, 'we do not keep a buggy, and even if we do keep a buggy we do not have time to hitch up anything to a buggy. Neighbour,' he says, 'you are certainly on a bust if you think you can catch the Orange Blossom now.'

'Well, then,' Mr. Paul D. Veere says, very sorrowful, 'I will have to go to jail.'

Then he flops himself down in a chair and covers his face with his hands, and he is a spectacle such as is bound to touch almost any heart, and when she sees him in this state Miss Beulah Beauregard begins crying because she hates to see anybody as sorrowed up as Mr. Paul D. Veere, and between sobs she asks Little Alfie to think of something to do about the situation.

'Let Mr. Paul D. Veere ride Governor Hicks to the station,' Miss Beauregard says. 'After all,' she says, 'I cannot forget his courtesy in sending me half-way here in his car from his shooting-lodge after I pop him with the pot of cold cream, instead of making me walk as those Yale guys do the time they red-light me.'

'Why,' Little Alfie says, 'it is a mile and a quarter from the gate out here to the station. I know,' he says, 'because I get a guy in an automobile to clock it on his meter one day last week, figuring to give Last Hope a workout over the full Derby route pretty soon. The road must be fetlock deep in mud at this time, and,' Little Alfie says, 'Governor Hicks cannot as much as stand up in the mud. The only horse in the world that can run fast enough through this mud to make the Orange Blossom is Last Hope, but,' Little Alfie says, 'of course I'm not letting anybody ride a horse as valuable as Last Hope to catch trains.'

Well, at this Mr. Paul D. Veere lifts his head and looks at Little Alfie with great interest and speaks as follows:

'How much is this valuable horse worth?' Mr. Paul D. Veere says.

'Why,' Little Alfie says, 'he is worth anyway fifty G's to me, because,' he says, 'this is the sum Colonel Winn is giving to the winner of the Kentucky Derby, and there is no doubt whatever that Last Hope will be this winner, especially,' Little Alfie says, 'if it comes up mud.'

'I do not carry any such large sum of money as you mention on my person,' Mr. Paul D. Veere says, 'but,' he says, 'if you are willing to trust me, I will give you my IOU for same, just to let me ride your horse to the station. I am once the best amateur steeplechase rider in the Hunts Club,' Mr. Paul D. Veere says, 'and if your horse can run at all there is still a chance for me to keep out of jail.'

Well, the chances are Little Alfie will by no means consider extending a lone of credit for fifty G's to Mr. Paul D. Veere or any other banker, and especially a banker who is once an amateur steeplechase jock, because if there is one thing Little Alfie does not trust it is an amateur steeplechase jock, and furthermore Little Alfie is somewhat offended because Mr. Paul D. Veere seems to think he is running a livery stable.

But Miss Beulah Beauregard is now crying so loud nobody can scarcely hear themselves think, and Little Alfie gets to figuring what she may say to him if he does not rent Last Hope to Mr. Paul D. Veere at this time and it comes out later that Last Hope does not happen to win the Kentucky Derby after all. So he finally says all right, and Mr. Paul D. Veere at once outs with a little gold pencil and a notebook, and scribbles off a marker for fifty G's to Little Alfie.

And the next thing anybody knows, Little Alfie is leading Last Hope out of the barn and up to the gate with nothing on him but a bridle as Little Alfie does not wish to waste time saddling, and as he is boosting Mr. Paul D. Veere on to Last Hope Little Alfie speaks as follows:

'You have three minutes left,' Little Alfie says. 'It is almost a straight course, except for a long turn going into the last quarter. Let this fellow run,' he says. 'You will find plenty of mud all the way, but,' Little Alfie says, 'this is a mud-running fool. In fact,' Little Alfie says, 'you are pretty lucky it comes up mud.'

Then he gives Last Hope a smack on the hip and away goes Last Hope lickity-split through the mud and anybody can see from the way Mr. Paul D. Veere is sitting on him that Mr. Paul D. Veere knows what time it is when it comes to riding. In fact, Little Alfie himself says he never sees a better seat anywhere in his life, especially for a guy who is riding bareback.

Well, Little Alfie watches them go down the road in a gob of mud, and it will always be one of the large regrets of Little Alfie's life that he leaves his split-second super in hock in Miami, because he says he is sure Last Hope runs the first quarter through the mud faster than any quarter is ever run before in this world. But of course Little Alfie is more excited than somewhat at this moment, and the chances are he exaggerates Last Hope's speed.

However, there is no doubt that Last Hope goes over the road very rapidly, indeed, as a coloured party who is out squirrel hunting comes along a few minutes afterward and tells Little Alfie that something goes past him on the road so fast he cannot tell exactly what it is, but he states that he is pretty sure it is old Henry Devil himself, because he smells smoke as it passes him, and hears a voice yelling hi-yah. But

of course the chances are this voice is nothing but the voice of Mr. Paul D. Veere yelling words of encouragement to Last Hope.

It is not until the station-master at Tillinghast, a guy by the name of Asbury Potts, drives over to Miss Beulah Beauregard's ancestral home an hour later that Little Alfie hears that as Last Hope pulls up at the station and Mr. Paul D. Veere dismounts with so much mud on him that nobody can tell if he is a plaster cast or what, the horse is gimping as bad as Mr. Paul D. Veere himself, and Asbury Potts says there is no doubt Last Hope bows a tendon, or some such, and that if they are able to get him to the races again he will eat his old wool hat.

'But, personally,' Asbury Potts says as he mentions this sad news, 'I do not see what Mr. Paul D. Veere's hurry is, at that, to be pushing a horse so hard. He has fifty-seven seconds left by my watch when the Orange Blossom pulls in right on time to the dot,' Asbury Potts says.

Well, at this Little Alfie sits down and starts figuring, and finally he figures that Last Hope runs the mile and a quarter in around 2.03 in the mud, with maybe one hundred and sixty pounds up, for Mr. Paul D. Veere is no feather duster, and no horse ever runs a mile and a quarter in the mud in the Kentucky Derby as fast as this, or anywhere else as far as anybody knows, so Little Alfie claims that this is practically flying.

But of course few citizens ever accept Little Alfie's figures as strictly official, because they do not know if Asbury Potts's watch is properly regulated for timing race horses, even though Asbury Potts is 100 per cent. right when he says they will never be able to get Last Hope to the races again.

Well, I meet up with Little Alfie one night this summer in Mindy's Restaurant on Broadway, and it is the first time he is observed in these parts in some time, and he seems to be looking very prosperous, indeed, and after we get to cutting up old touches, he tells me the reason for this prosperity.

It seems that after Mr. Paul D. Veere returns to New York and puts back in his bank whatever it is that it is advisable for him to put back, or takes out whatever it is that seems best to take out, and gets himself all rounded up so there is no chance of his going to jail, he remembers that there is a slight difference between him and Little Alfie, so what does Mr. Paul D. Veere do but sit down and write out a cheque for fifty G's to Little Alfie to take up his IOU, so Little Alfie is nothing out on account of losing the Kentucky Derby, and, in fact, he is stone rich, and I am glad to hear of it, because I always sympathize deeply with him in his bereavement over the loss of Last Hope. Then I ask Little Alfie what he is doing in New York at this time, and he states to me as follows:

'Well,' Little Alfie says, 'I will tell you. The other day,' he says, 'I get to thinking things over, and among other things I get to thinking that after Last Hope wins the Kentucky Derby, he is a sure thing to go on and also win the Maryland

Preakness, because,' Little Alfie says, 'the Preakness is a sixteenth of a mile shorter than the Derby, and a horse that can run a mile and a quarter in the mud in around 2.03 with a brick house on his back is bound to make anything that wears hair look silly at a mile and three-sixteenths, especially,' Little Alfie says, 'if it comes up mud.

'So,' Little Alfie says, 'I am going to call on Mr. Paul D. Veere and see if he does not wish to pay me the Preakness stake, too, because,' he says, 'I am building the finest house in South Georgia at Last Hope, which is my stock farm where Last Hope himself is on public exhibition, and I can always use a few bobs here and there.'

'Well, Alfie,' I say, 'this seems to me to be a very fair proposition, indeed, and,' I say, 'I am sure Mr. Paul D. Veere will take care of it as soon as it is called to his attention, as there is no doubt you and Last Hope are of great service to Mr. Paul D. Veere. By the way, Alfie,' I say, 'whatever becomes of Governor Hicks?'

'Why,' Little Alfie says, 'do you know Governor Hicks turns out to be a terrible disappointment to me as a plough horse? He learns how to sit down from Abimelech, the mule, and nothing will make him stir, not even the same encouragement I give him the day he drops down there third at Hialeah.

'But,' Little Alfie says, 'my ever-loving wife is figuring on using the old Governor as a saddle-horse for our twins, Beulah and Little Alfie, Junior, when they get old enough,

although,' he says, 'I tell her the Governor will never be worth a dime in such a way especially,' Little Alfie says, 'if it comes up mud.'

The Big Umbrella

Now No. 23 is a very high-class trap which is patronized only by the better element of rumpots in New York, and what I am doing in these unusual surroundings with Spider McCoy, the fight manager, is something that requires a job of telling.

This No. 23 is a spot where wealthy characters assemble on an afternoon and evening to sit around tables or stand at the bar guzzling old-fashioneds, and Scotches, and other delicacies of this nature, and there are always many swell-looking Judys present, so it is generally a scene of great gaiety, but it is certainly about the last place you will ever expect to find Spider McCoy and me.

But there we are, and the reason we are there starts in front of Mindy's restaurant on Broadway, when I observe Spider McCoy walking along the street following close behind a tall young character of most unique appearance in many respects.

This tall young character cannot be more than twenty-one years of age, and he is maybe six feet two inches tall and must weigh around one hundred and ninety pounds. He has shoulders like the back of a truck, and he has blond hair, and pink cheeks, and is without doubt as good-looking as any male character has a right to be without causing comment.

He is wearing a pair of striped pants, and a cut-away coat, and a white vest, and a high hat, and in fact he is dressed as if he just comes from a high-toned wedding such as you see in pictures in the Sunday blats, and this is by no means a familiar costume in front of Mindy's, so naturally the tall young character attracts no little attention, and many citizens wonder what he is advertising.

Well, as soon as he sees me, Spider McCoy beckons me to join him, and as I fall into step with him behind the tall young character, Spider McCoy says to me:

'Sh-h-h-h!' Spider McCoy says. 'Here is without doubt the next heavy-weight champion of the whole world. I just see him kiss the jockey of a short down the street with a right-hand shot that is positively a lily. It does not travel more than three inches. The jockey takes a run at this party quite ferocious and, bap, down he goes as still as a plank under his own cab. It is the best natural right hand I ever see. He reminds me of Jack Dempsey,' Spider McCoy says. 'Also Gene Tunney.'

Well, it is very seldom I see Spider McCoy but what he is speaking of some guy who is the next heavy-weight

champion of the world, and they nearly always remind him of Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney, and sometimes of Max Schmeling, so I am about to go about my business when Spider grabs me by the arm and compels me to accompany him.

'Who is the guy, Spider?' I say.

'What difference does it make who a guy is that can punch like he can?' Spider says. 'All I know is he is the next heavy-weight champion of the world if he gets in the proper hands, such as mine. The broads will go crazy about his looks and the way he dresses. He will be a wonderful card,' Spider says. 'You can see by the way he carries himself that he is a natural fighter. He is loose and light on his feet,' he says. 'Chances are there is plenty of animal in him. I like my fighters to have plenty of animal in them, especially,' Spider says, 'my heavy-weights.'

'Well, Spider,' I say, 'from the way your heavy-weights I see knock off that hot meat on you, there is plenty of animal in them. But,' I say, 'how do you know this party wishes to be a fighter, anyway? Maybe he has other plans in life.'

'We will find out,' Spider McCoy says. 'We will tail him until we learn where he hangs out so I can make a connection with him. Look at his chest development,' Spider says. 'Look at his small waist-line,' he says. 'Look at the shape of his head.'

So we follow the tall young character until he leads us into No. 23, and I notice that Sammy the doorman gives him a very small hello, and I figure the tall young character cannot be anybody much, because when anybody is anybody much, Sammy the doorman gives them a very large hello, indeed. In fact, Sammy's hello to the tall young character is almost as small as the hello he gives us, and this is practically unnoticeable.

Well, I know Sammy the doorman from back down the years when he is not working in a joint as classy as No. 23, and to tell the truth I know him when he is nothing but a steer for a bust-out joint in West Forty-third, a bust-out joint being a joint where they will cheat your eyeballs out at cards, and dice, and similar devices. So I ask Sammy who the tall young character is, and Sammy says:

'Oh,' he says, 'he is one of these ex-kings. He comes from some nickel country over in Europe. A dictator gives him the foot off the throne and then chases him out of the country and takes personal charge of matters. His name is Jonas. I mean the ex-king,' Sammy says. 'They are getting to be quite a nuisance around.'

'Is this ex-king holding anything?' I say.

'Nothing,' Sammy says. 'Not a quarter. The hotel where he is stopping catches him out to a society tea the other afternoon and puts a hickey in his keyhole and now he cannot get at his other clothes and has to go around the way

you see him. The chances are,' Sammy says, 'he is in here looking to cadge a drink or a bite to eat.'

Well, Spider McCoy is looking the joint over to see if he can find anybody he knows to introduce him to the ex-king, but when I tell him what Sammy says, Spider at once eases himself up alongside the ex-king and begins talking to him, because Spider knows that when guys are not holding anything they are willing to talk to anybody.

He is somewhat surprised to find that the ex-king speaks English and seems to be a nice, pleasant young character and the chances are he is by no means high-toned even when he is holding something, so pretty soon Spider is buying him Scotches, although this is by no means a dram that Spider approves of for fighters unless they buy them themselves, and finally Spider says to him like this:

'I see you tag that taxi jockey over on Broadway,' Spider says. 'I never see a more beautiful right in my born days. It reminds me something of Georges Carpentier's right, only,' Spider says, Georges always pulls his just a little before shooting to get more leverage, and you just barely move yours. Why,' Spider says, 'the more I think of it, the more I am amazed. What does the guy do to vex you?'

'Why,' the ex-king says, 'he does not do anything to vex me. I am quite unvexed at the time. It is almost inadvertent. The taxi-driver gets off his seat and starts to run after a passenger that fails to settle his account with him, and he is about to collide with me there on the sidewalk, so,' he says, 'I

just put out my right hand to ward him off, and he runs into it with his chin and knocks himself unconscious. I must look him up some day and express my regrets. But,' he says, 'I will never think of deliberately striking anybody without serious provocation.'

Well, at this, Spider McCoy is somewhat nonplussed, because he can now see that what he takes for the ex-king's natural punch is merely an accident that may not happen if it is on purpose, and furthermore, the ex-king's expressions are scarcely the expressions of anybody with much animal in them, and Spider is commencing to regret the purchase of the Scotches for the ex-king. In fact, I can see that Spider is reaching a state of mind that may cause him to take a pop at the ex-king for grossly deceiving him.

But Spider McCoy cannot look at six feet two and one hundred and ninety pounds of anybody under thirty without becoming most avaricious, and so after a couple of more Scotches, he begins feeling the ex-king's muscles, which causes the ex-king to laugh quite heartily, as it seems he is a little ticklish in spots, and finally Spider says:

'Well,' he says, 'there is undoubtedly great natural strength here, and all it needs is to be properly developed. Why,' Spider says, 'the more I think of you knocking a guy out by just letting him run into your hand, the more impressed I am. In fact,' he says, 'I can scarcely get over it. How do you feel about becoming a professional?'

'A professional what?' the ex-king says.

'A professional boxer,' Spider says. 'It is a name we have in this country for prize-fighters.'

'I never give such a matter a thought,' the ex-king says. 'What is the idea?'

'The idea is money,' Spider McCoy says. 'I hear of other ideas for professional boxing, but,' he says, 'I do not approve of them, your Majesty.'

'Call me Jonas,' the ex-king says. 'Do you mean to tell me I can make money out of boxing? Well, I will feel right kindly towards anything I can make money out of. I find,' he says, 'that money seems to be somewhat necessary in this country.'

So then Spider McCoy explains to him how he can make a ton of money by winning the heavy-weight championship of the world and that all he requires to do this is to have Spider for his manager. Furthermore, Spider explains that all he will ask for being the manager is 33⅓ per cent. of the ex-king's earnings, with the expenses off the top, which means before they cut up anything.

Well, the ex-king listens very intently and keeps nodding his head to show that he understands, and finally he says:

'In the meantime,' he says, 'do I eat?'

'The best, your Majesty,' Spider says.

'Call me Jonas,' the ex-king says again. 'All right, then,' Jonas says, 'I will become heavy-weight champion of the

world as you say, and make a ton of money, and then I snap my fingers at Dictator Poltafuss, the dirty rat.'

'The big heel,' Spider says.

So Spider McCoy takes Jonas to his home, which is an apartment in West Fiftieth Street, where his orphan niece, Miss Margie Grogan, keeps house for him, and bosses him around no little, and quite some, and I go with them to lend moral support to Spider, because by this time he is slightly Scotched up, and he always likes to have a little moral support when he goes home Scotched.

His niece, Miss Margie Grogan, is a Judy of maybe twenty, and if you like them small, and lively, and with huckleberry hair, and blue eyes, and freckles on the nose, and plenty of temper, she is all right. In fact, I hear some say that Margie is extra all right, but those who say this are younger than I am and maybe not such good judges. Personally, I like them with more heft and less temper.

It is not a large apartment where Spider McCoy lives, but it is a neat and clean little joint, at that, for Margie is without doubt a good all-round housekeeper. Furthermore, she is much better than a raw hand with a skillet, and she comes flying out of the kitchen with her face red and her hair all tousled up to meet Spider, but when she sees Jonas behind him she stops, and speaks as follows:

'Good grief,' Margie says, 'another big umbrella.'

'What do you mean, umbrella?' Spider says.

'Why,' Margie says, 'something that folds up. I never know you to bring home any other kind.'

'This is no umbrella,' Spider says. 'This is the next heavy-weight champion of the world.'

'No,' Margie says, 'it cannot be, for two months you tell me that somebody called Ben Robbins is the next heavy-weight champion of the world.'

'Ben Robbins is nothing but a bum,' Spider says.

'So I find out,' Margie says. 'Well,' she says, 'come on in, you and your next heavy-weight champion of the world. We are about to put on the corned beef and.'

Then Spider introduces Jonas to her, and right away Jonas grabs her hand and lifts it to his lips, and this astonishes Margie no little, and afterward she tells me that she regrets for a moment that she just recently sticks her hand in a pot of boiled onions, and the chances are Jonas does too.

But Miss Margie Grogan is by no means in favour of prize-fighters in any manner, shape or form, because all they ever mean to her is an extra plate, and more cooking, and it is plain to be seen that though he seems to be an expert hand-kisser, Jonas is no more welcome than any of the others that Spider brings home, and he brings them home too often to suit Margie.

The ones he brings home are always heavy-weight prospects, for while Spider McCoy manages a number of fighters, he never gets excited about anything but a heavy-weight, and this is the way all fight managers are. A fight manager may have a light-weight champion of the world, but he will get more heated up about some sausage who scarcely knows how to hold his hands up if he is a heavy-weight.

Personally, I consider it most remarkable that Margie is able to spot Jonas as one of Spider's heavy-weight prospects in a high hat and a cut-away coat, but Margie says it is a sixth sense with her. She says Spider once brings home a party with a beard half-way down to his waist, but that as soon as she opens the door she pegs him as a heavy-weight prospect that Spider does not yet have time to get shaved.

But she says she is so fond of Spider that she takes them all in, and feeds them up good, and the only time she ever bars anybody on him is the time Spider brings home a big widow he finds in Mickey Walker's bar and claims he is going to make her the only female contender for the heavy-weight title in the world. Miss Margie Grogan says she has to draw the line somewhere on Uncle Spider's prospects.

Well, from now on, Spider has Jonas in the gymnasium for several hours every day, teaching how to box, and anybody will tell you that Spider is as good a teacher as there is in the world, especially of a punch that is called the one-two, although this punch is really two punches. It is a left jab followed through fast with a right cross, and it is considered quite a gravy punch if properly put on.

Jonas lives in a spare room in Spider's apartment, and takes his meals there, and Spider tells me everything will be very nice indeed for them all, if Margie does not happen to take more of a dislike than somewhat to Jonas, especially when she learns that he is once a king and gets the old hoovus-groovus from a dictator.

Margie tells Spider McCoy that it proves there must be anyway a trace of umbrella in a character who lets anybody run him out of his own country, and Spider says the only reason he does not give her an argument on the matter is that he is not sure but what she is right, though not because Jonas lets himself get run out.

'I do not figure this in at all,' Spider says. 'I sometimes let myself get run out of places, and I do not think there is umbrella in me, or anyway not much. But,' he says, 'a young heavy-weight prospect is a peculiar proposition. You can find out in the gymnasium if he can box, if he is fast, and if he can punch, but you cannot find out if he can take a punch and if he is dead game until you see him boffed around good in the ring.

'And,' Spider says, 'this is what you must find out before you know if you have a heavy-weight contender, or just a heavy-weight. This Jonas looks great in the gym, but,' he says, 'sometimes I wonder about him. I do not know why I wonder, but I remember I wonder the same way about Ben Robbins, who is such a gymnasium marvel that I turn down twenty thousand for his contract. Then,' Spider says, 'I put him with this punching-bag, Joe Grosher, in Newark, and my

guy geeks it the first good smack he gets. Somehow,' Spider says, 'Jonas has a certain look in his eyes that reminds me of Ben Robbins.'

'Well,' I says, 'if you are not sure about him, why not chuck him in with somebody the same as you do Ben, and find out if he can fight, or what?'

'Look,' Spider McCoy says, 'I will never find out anything more about this guy than I know now, if the offers I am getting keep on coming in. I will not have to find out,' he says. 'We must have a hundred propositions right now, and I am going to commence taking some.'

Naturally the blats make quite an uproar when they discover that an ex-king is training to be a fighter, and they are full of stories and pictures about Jonas every day, and of course Spider does not discourage this publicity because it is responsible for the offers of matches for Jonas from all over the country.

But the matches Spider finally commences accepting are not the matches the promoters offer, because the promoters offer opponents who may have no respect for royalty, and may try to knock Jonas's brains out. The matches Spider accepts have his own personal supervision, and they are much better for Jonas than what the promoters might think up.

These matches are with sure-footed watermen, who plunge in swiftly and smoothly when Jonas waves at them, and

while everybody knows these matches are strictly tank jobs, nobody cares, especially the customers who almost break down the doors of the clubs where Jonas appears, trying to get in. The customers are so greatly pleased to be permitted to observe an ex-king in short pants that they scarcely pause for their change at the box-office windows.

Of course Spider does not tell Jonas that these contests are dipsy-doos and Jonas thinks he really is belting out these porter-houses, and as he is getting pretty nice money for the work, he feels very well, indeed. Anybody will tell you that it helps build up a young fighter's confidence to let him see a few people take naps in front of him as he is coming along, though Jonas is slightly bewildered the night at the Sun Casino when a generally very reliable waterboy by the name of Charley Drunckley misses his cue and falls down before Jonas can hit him.

The boxing commission is somewhat bewildered, too, and asks a few questions that nobody tries to answer, and Spider McCoy explains to Jonas that he hits so fast he cannot notice his punches landing himself, but even then Jonas continues to look somewhat bewildered.

He continues living at Spider McCoy's apartment, because Spider is by no means sucker enough to let Jonas get very far away from him, what with so many unscrupulous characters around the boxing game who are always looking to steal somebody's fighter, especially a fighter who is worth his weight in platinum, like Jonas, but from what I hear Miss Margie Grogan continues to play plenty of ice for him.

She goes to see him fight once, because everybody else in town is trying to go, but Margie is pretty cute, and she can spot a tank job as far as anybody, and while she knows very well that it is Spider McCoy and not Jonas who is responsible for these half-Gainors that are going on, she tells Spider that if Jonas is not a big umbrella he will be fighting somebody who can really fight.

'Over my dead body,' Spider says. 'If I ever hear of anybody that can really fight trying to fight my Jonas, I will cause trouble. And Margie,' Spider says, 'do not call Jonas an umbrella in my presence. It hurts my feelings.'

But Jonas is a great disappointment to Spider in some respects, especially about publicity angles. Spider wishes to get a tin crown made for him to wear going into the ring, but Jonas will not listen to this, and what is more he will not stand for as much as a monocle, because he claims he does not know how to keep one in his eye.

Well, the dough is rolling in on Spider and Jonas just with tank acts, but some of the boxing scribes are commencing to say Jonas ought to meet real competition, and I tell Spider myself it may be a good idea to see if Jonas really can fight.

'Yes,' Spider says, 'I am sometimes tempted myself. He shapes up so good that I get to thinking maybe he is the makings, at that. But I think I will let well enough alone.

'Anyway,' Spider says, 'what a sap I will be to throw him in with competition as long as the suckers will pay to see him

as he is. I can go on with him indefinitely this way,' Spider says, 'but one smack on the chops may finish us up for good. Yes,' he says, 'I think I will let well enough alone.'

Now, one day a chunky guy with a big moustache and his hair cut short comes to see Jonas and has a long talk with him, and Jonas tells Spider that this guy is from his home country over in Europe, and that he is sent by the dictator who runs Jonas off, and his cabinet, who wish Jonas to return home to talk to them about certain matters, which may include a proposition for him to be king again, and Jonas says it sounds like a fair sort of proposition, at that.

'Why,' Spider says, 'nobody can talk business with you now. I am your manager, and all propositions must come to me first. Is there any chance of us making any real dough out of your going back to being king?'

Well, Jonas says it is by no means definite that he is to be king again, but that there is something in the air, and as he now has plenty of dough, and it is safe for him to return, he wishes to go home a while if only to pick up a few belongings that he does not have time to collect the last time he departs.

Furthermore, nothing will do but Spider must go with him, and Spider says this means Miss Margie Grogan will have to go, too, because she is practically his right arm in business, and every other way, and Jonas says he thinks this is an excellent idea. He says Margie looks to him as if a sea voyage will do her good, and when Spider mentions this

opinion to Margie, she says she wishes the big umbrella will stop looking at her to see how she looks, but that she will go just to spite him, and so they sail away.

Well, it is some months before I see Spider McCoy again, and then I run into him on Broadway one afternoon, and he is all dressed up in striped pants, and white spats, and a cut-away coat, and a high hat, and before I can start asking questions he says to me like this:

'Come with me to number twenty-three,' he says. 'I am on a meet there with somebody, and I will tell you all.'

So from now on for a while this is Spider McCoy's story:

> Well [Spider says] we have a most satisfactory journey in every respect. Going over on the boat, what happens what with the moon and the stars, and the music, and dancing, and all this and that, but Margie and Jonas get so they are on slightly better terms, and this makes things more pleasant for me, as they are together quite a bit, and this gives me time to catch up on my drinking, which I neglect no little when I am so busy looking after Jonas's interests.
>
> He gets a wonderful reception when we reach his old home country, what with bands and soldiers, and one thing and another, but I am surprised to find that none of the natives hear of me as his manager. In fact, it seems that his reputation there rests entirely on once being king, and they never hear of his accomplishments in the

ring, which consist of eighteen consecutive k.o's. This really hurts my feelings after all my work with him in the gym and the trouble I go to in picking his opponents.

Personally, his country does not strike me as much of a country, and in fact it strikes me as nothing but a sort of double Jersey City, and the natives speak a language of their own, and the scenery is filled with high hills, and take it all around, I do not consider it anything to get excited about, but it is plain to be seen that Jonas is glad to get back there.

Well, we are not there more than a few hours before we get a line on what is doing, and what is doing is that the people wish Jonas to be king again, and they are making life a burden for this Dictator Poltafuss, and his cabinet, and Poltafuss figures it will be a good scheme to put Jonas back, all right, but first he wishes to discuss certain terms of his own with Jonas.

The very afternoon of the day we arrive there is a cabinet meeting in the palace, which is a building quite similar to a county court-house, and Jonas is invited to this meeting. They do not invite me, but naturally as Jonas's manager, I insist on going to protect his interests, and in fact I consider it quite unethical for them to be inviting my fighter to discuss terms of any kind and not including me, and then Jonas requests Margie to also accompany him.

The cabinet meeting is in a big room with high windows overlooking a public square and in this square a large number of natives of Jonas's country gather while the meeting is in progress, and talk among themselves in their own language.

There must be thirty characters of one kind and another sitting around a big table when we enter the room, and I figure they are the cabinet, and it does not take me long to pick Dictator Poltafuss. He is sitting at the head of the table and he is wearing a uniform with about four pounds of medals on his chest, and he has short black whiskers, and a fierce eye, and anybody can see that he is built from the ground up.

He is as big as a Russian wrestler, and looks to me as if he may be a tough character in every respect. A solid-looking Judy in a black dress is sitting in a chair behind him with some knitting in her hands, and she does not seem to be paying much attention to what is going on.

Well, as we enter the room and Jonas sees Poltafuss, a look comes into Jonas's eyes that is without doubt the same look I sometimes see in the gymnasium and in the ring, and which is the look that makes me wonder about him and keeps me from ever putting him in without knowing his opponent's right name and address, and, thinks I to myself, he is afraid of the guy with the sassafras. Thinks I to myself, Margie is right. He is a big umbrella.

Poltafuss begins talking very fast to Jonas, and in their own language, and after he gets through, Jonas does a lot of talking in the same language, and finally Jonas turns to us, and in our language he tells us what Poltafuss says to him and what he says to Poltafuss, and what Poltafuss says is really somewhat surprising.

'He says,' Jonas says, 'that I will be returned to the throne if I first marry his sister. She is the chromo sitting behind him. I tell him she is older than he is, and has a big nose, and a moustache. He says,' Jonas says, 'that she is only a year older, which puts her shading forty, and that a big horn indicates character, and a moustache is good luck.

'Then,' Jonas says, 'I tell him the real reason I will not marry her, which is because I am going to marry someone else.'

'Wait a minute, Jonas,' I say. 'You mustn't never tell a lie, even to be king. You know you are not going to marry anybody. I do not permit my fighters to marry,' I say. 'It takes their mind off their business.'

'Yes,' Jonas says, 'I am going to marry Miss Margie Grogan. We fix it up on the ship.'

Then all of a sudden Poltafuss jumps up and says to Margie in English like this:

'Why,' he says, 'the idea is ridiculous. He cannot marry you. He is of royal blood. You are of common stock,' he says.

'Look, Jonas,' Margie says, 'are you going to stand here and hear me insulted? If you are, I am leaving right now,' she says.

Then she starts for the door, and Jonas runs after her and grabs her by the arm and says:

'But, Margie,' he says, 'what can I do?'

'Well,' Margie says, 'you can boff this big ape for one thing, as any gentleman is bound to do, unless,' she says, 'there is even more umbrella in you than ever I suspect.'

'Why, yes,' Jonas says. 'To be sure, and certainly,' he says.

And with this he walks over to Poltafuss, but old Polty hears what Margie says, and as Jonas gets near him, he lets go a big right hand that starts down around China and bangs Jonas on the chin, and Jonas goes down.

Well, I thinks to myself, I am only glad this does not occur at the Garden some night when the joint is packed. Then I hear Margie's voice saying like this:

'Get up, Jonas,' Margie says. 'Get up and steady yourself.'

'It is no use, Margie,' I say. 'You are right, he is an umbrella.'

'You are a liar,' Margie says.

'Margie,' I say, 'remember you are speaking to your Uncle Spider.'

I am still thinking of how disrespectfully Margie addresses me, when I notice that Jonas is up on his feet, and as he gets up he sticks out his left in time to drive it through Poltafuss's whiskers, as Poltafuss rushes at him. This halts Polty for an instant, then he comes on again swinging both hands. He is strictly a wild thrower, but he hits like a steer kicking when he lands, and he has Jonas down three times in as many minutes, and every time I figure Jonas will remain there and doze off, but Margie says get up, and Jonas gets up, and when he gets up he has sense enough to stick his left in Poltafuss's beard.

There seems to be some slight confusion among the members of the cabinet as the contest opens, and I take a good strong grip on a big chair, just in case of fire or flood, but I wish to say I never witness a finer spirit of fair play than is exhibited by the members of the cabinet. They stand back against the wall and give Jonas and Poltafuss plenty of elbow-room, and they seem to be enjoying the affair no little. In fact, the only spectator present who does not seem to be enjoying it is Poltafuss's sister, who does not get up out of her chair to

get a better view, and furthermore does not stop her knitting, so I can see she is by no means a fight fan.

Pretty soon Jonas's left-hand sticking has Poltafuss's nose bleeding and then one eye begins to close, and I find myself getting very much interested, because I now see what I am looking for all my life, which is a dead game heavy-weight, and I can see that I will no longer have to be worrying about who I put Jonas in with. I see the next heavy-weight champion of the world as sure as I am standing there, and I now begin coaching Jonas in person.

'Downstairs, Jonas,' I say. 'In the elly-bay, Jonas,' I say.

So Jonas hits Poltafuss a left hook in the stomach, and Polty goes oof.

'The old one-two, Jonas,' I say, and Jonas stabs Poltafuss's nose with a long left, then follows through with a right cross, just as I educate him to do, and this right-hand cross lands on Polty's chin, among the whiskers, and down he goes as stiff as a board on his face, and when they fall in this manner, you may proceed at once to the pay-off window.

The next thing I know, Margie is in Jonas's arms, dabbing at his bloody face with a little handkerchief, and shedding tears, and a member of the cabinet that I afterward learn is the secretary of war is at one of the windows yelling down to the natives in the square and

they are yelling back at him, and later someone tells me that what he yells is that the king just flattens Poltafuss and what they are yelling back is long live the king.

'Spider,' Jonas says, 'I never have any real confidence in myself before, but I have now. I just lick the party who can lick any six guys in my country all at once and with one hand tied behind him. Spider,' he says, 'I know now I will be heavy-weight champion of the world.'

Well, Poltafuss is sitting up on the floor holding his nose with both hands, and looking somewhat dishevelled, but at this he puts his hands down long enough to speak as follows:

'No,' he says, 'you will be king, and your sweetheart there will be queen.'

And this is the way it turns out [Spider says] and Jonas and Poltafuss get along very nicely indeed together afterward, except once at a cabinet meeting when King Jonas has to flatten Poltafuss again to make him agree to some unemployment measure.

'But, Spider,' I say, as Spider McCoy finishes his story, 'you do not state what becomes of the dictator's sister.'

'Well,' Spider says, 'I will tell you. It seems to me that the dictator's sister gets a rough deal, one way and another, especially,' he says, 'as her beezer is by no means as big as some people think.'

'So,' Spider says, 'while I will always regret blowing the next heavy-weight champion of the world, I console myself with the thought that I get a wonderful and ever-loving wife, and if you will wait a few minutes longer, I will introduce you to the former Miss Sofia Poltafuss, now Mrs. Spider McCoy.'

For a Pal

For a matter of maybe fifteen years or more, Little Yid and Blind Benny are pals, and this is considered a very good thing for Benny because he is as blind as a bat, and maybe blinder, while Yid can see as good as anybody and sometimes better.

So Little Yid does the seeing for Benny, explaining in his own way to Benny just what he sees, such as a horse race or a baseball game or a prize fight or a play or a moving picture or anything else, for Yid and Blind Benny are great hands for going around and about wherever anything is coming off, no matter what, and up to the time this doll Mary Marble comes into their lives they are as happy as two pups in a basket.

How Benny comes to go blind I do not know, and nobody else along Broadway seems to know either, and in fact nobody cares, although I once hear Regret, the horse player,

say it is probably in sympathy with the judges at the race track, Regret being such a guy as claims all these judges are very blind indeed. But of course Regret is sore at these race-track judges because they always call the wrong horse for him in the close finishes.

Little Yid tells me that Blind Benny is once a stick man in a gambling joint in Denver, and a very good stick man, at that, and one night a fire comes off in a flop house on Larimer Street, and Blind Benny, who is not blind at this time, runs into the fire to haul out an old guy who has more smoke in him than somewhat, and a rush of flames burns Benny's eyes so bad he loses his sight.

Well, this may be the true story of how Benny comes to go blind, but I know Little Yid likes Benny so much that he is not going to give Benny the worst of any story he tells about him, and for all anybody knows maybe Benny really goes into the fire to search for the old guy. Personally, I do not believe in taking too much stock in any story you hear on Broadway about anything.

But there is no doubt about Blind Benny being blind. His eyelids are tacked down tight over his eyes, and there is no chance that he is faking, because many guys keep close tab on him for years and never catch him peeping once.

Furthermore, several guys send Benny to eye specialists at different times to see if they can do anything about his eyes, and all these specialists say he is one of the blindest guys they ever examine. Regret says maybe it is a good thing, at

that, because Benny is so smart as a blind guy that the chances are if he can see he will be too smart to live.

He is especially smart when it comes to playing such games as pinochle. In fact, Benny is about as good a single-handed pinochle player as there is in this town, and there are many first-rate pinochle players in this town, if anybody asks you.

Benny punches little holes in the cards so he can tell which is which by feeling them, and the only way anybody can beat him is to cheat him, and it is considered most discourteous to cheat a blind guy, especially as Benny is always apt to catch a guy at cheating and put up an awful beef.

He is a tall, skinny guy with a thin face, and is by no means bad-looking, while Little Yid is about knee high to a snake, and they look like a father and his little boy as they go along the street with Little Yid hanging on to Blind Benny's arm and giving him the right steer.

Of course it is by no means an uncommon thing on Broadway for citizens to steer these blind guys across the street, although if the blind guys have any sense they will keep their dukes on their tin cups while they are being steered, but it is a most unusual proposition in this town for anybody to go steering a blind guy around for fifteen years the way Little Yid steers Blind Benny, as Blind Benny is a guy who takes plenty of steering.

In fact, one time Yid has to be away from business for a week, and he leaves Blind Benny with a committee of guys, and every day one of these guys has to steer Benny around wherever he wishes to go, which is wherever there is anything going on, and Benny wears the whole committee plumb out before Yid gets back, as Benny is certainly a guy who likes to go around and about. Furthermore, he is so unhappy while Yid is away that he becomes a great nuisance, because it seems that none of the committee can see things as good as Yid for him, or explain them so he can understand them.

Personally, I will not care to have Little Yid do my seeing for me, even if I am blind, because I listen to him telling what he sees to Blind Benny many times, and it seems to me Little Yid is often somewhat cock-eyed in his explanations.

Furthermore, I will hate to be explaining things to Blind Benny, because he is always arguing about what is taking place, and giving you his opinions of it, even though he cannot see. In fact, although he cannot see a lick, Blind Benny is freer with his opinions than guys who can see from here to Europe.

It is a very interesting sight to watch Little Yid and Blind Benny at the race track, for they are both great hands for playing the horses and, in fact, Benny is a better handicapper than a lot of guys who have two good eyes and a pair of spectacles to do their handicapping with.

At night they get the form sheet and sit up in their room with Yid reading off the past performances and the time trials, and all this and that, and with Blind Benny doping the horses from what Yid reads, and picking the ones he figures ought to win the next day. They always have a big argument over each horse, and Yid will tell Blind Benny he is daffy to be picking whatever horse it is he picks, and Benny will tell Yid he is out of his mind to think anything else can beat this horse, and they will holler and yell at each other for hours.

But they always wind up very friendly, and they always play the horse Benny picks, for Yid has much confidence in Benny's judgment, although he hollers and yells at him more than somewhat when one of his picks loses. They sit up in the grandstand during every race and Yid will explain to Benny what is doing in the race, and generally he manages to mention that the horse they are betting on is right up there and going easy, even though it may be laying back of the nine ball, for Yid believes in making Blind Benny feel good at all times.

But when a horse they are betting on is really in the running, especially in the stretch, Yid starts to root him home, and Benny roots right along with him as if he can see, and rocks back and forth in his seat, and pounds with his cane, and yells, 'Come on with him, Jock,' the same as anybody with two good eyes.

I am telling you all this about Little Yid and Benny to show you that they are very close friends indeed. They live together and eat together and argue together, and nobody

ever hears of a nicer friendship on Broadway, although naturally some citizens figure for a while that one or the other must have some angle in this friendship, as it is practically uncanny for a friendship to last all these years on Broadway.

Blind Benny has some kind of an income from his people out West who are sorry about him being blind, and Little Yid has a piece of a small factory run by a couple of his brothers over in Hoboken where they make caps such as some citizens wear on their heads, and it seems this factory does very well, and the brothers are willing to send Little Yid his piece without him being around the factory very much, as they do not seem to consider him any boost to a cap factory.

So Yid and Blind Benny have all the money they need to go along, what with making a little scratch now and then on the races, and they never seem to care for any company but their own and are very happy and contented with each other. In all the years they are together Yid is never known to more than say hello to a doll, and of course Blind Benny cannot see dolls, anyway, which many citizens claim is a great break for Benny, so Yid and Benny are carrying no weight in this respect.

Now one night it seems that Ike Jacobs, the ticket spec, has a pair of Chinese duckets on the opening of a new play by the name of Red Hot Love, a Chinese ducket being a complimentary ducket that is punched full of holes like Chinese money, and which you do not have to pay for, and

Ike gives these duckets to Little Yid and Blind Benny, which is considered very large-hearted of Ike, at that.

So when the curtain goes up on Red Hot Love, Yid and Benny are squatted right down in front among many well-known citizens who are all dressed up in evening clothes, because this Red Hot Love has a bunch of swell actors in it, and is expected to be first-class.

Naturally, when the play begins, Yid has to give Blind Benny a little information about what is doing, otherwise Benny cannot appreciate the thing. So Yid starts off in a whisper, but any time Yid starts explaining anything to Benny he always winds up getting excited, and talking so loud you can hear him down at the Battery.

Of course Blind Benny can follow the play as good as anybody if there is plenty of gab on the stage, but he likes to know what actors are doing the gabbing, and what they look like, and what the scenery looks like, and other details that he cannot see, and Little Yid is telling him in such a voice as causes some of the citizens around to say shush-shush. But Little Yid and Blind Benny are accustomed to being shushed in theatres, so they do not pay much attention.

Well, Red Hot Love is one of these problem plays, and neither Little Yid nor Blind Benny can make much of it, although they are no worse off than anybody else around them, at that. But Little Yid tries to explain to Blind Benny what it is all about, and Benny speaks out loud as follows:

'It sounds to me like a rotten play.'

'Well,' Little Yid says, 'maybe the play is not so rotten, but the acting is.'

There is much shushing from one and all around them, and the actors are giving them the bad eye from the stage, because the actors can hear what they say, and are very indignant, especially over this crack about acting.

Well, the next thing anybody knows down the aisle come a couple of big guys who put the arm on Little Yid and Blind Benny and give them the old heave-o out of the joint, as you are not supposed to speak out loud in a theatre about any bad acting that is going on there, no matter how bad it is.

Anyway, as Little Yid and Blind Benny are being prodded up the aisle by the big guys, Blind Benny states as follows:

'I still claim,' he says, 'that it sounds like a rotten play.'

'Well,' Little Yid says, 'the acting certainly is.'

There is much applause as Yid and Benny are getting the heave-o, and many citizens claim it is because the customers are glad to see them heaved, but afterward it comes out that what many of the customers are really applauding is the statements by Little Yid and Benny.

Well, Yid and Benny do not mind getting the heave-o so much, as they are heaved out of many better theatres than this in their time, but they are very indignant when the box

office refuses to give them back the admission price, although of course their duckets do not cost them anything in the first place and they are a little out of line in trying to collect.

They are standing on the sidewalk saying what an outrage it is when all of a sudden out of the theatre pops this doll by the name of Mary Marble, and her face is very red, and she is also very indignant, because it seems that in the second act of the play there are some very coarse cracks led out on the stage, and it seems that Mary Marble is such a doll as believes that cracks of this nature are only fit for married people to hear, and she is by no means married.

Of course Little Yid and Blind Benny do not know at the time that she is Mary Marble, and in fact they do not know her from Adam's off ox as she marches up to them and speaks as follows:

'Gentlemen,' she says, 'I wish to compliment you on your judgment of the affair inside. I hear what you say as you are getting ejected,' she says, 'and I wish to state that you are both right. It is a rotten play, and the acting is rotten.'

Now off this meeting, what happens but Mary Marble gets to going around with Little Yid and Blind Benny whenever she can spare time from her job, which is managing a little joint on Broadway where they sell stockings such as dolls wear on their legs, except in summer-time, although even when they wear these stockings you cannot tell if a doll has

anything on her legs unless you pinch them, the stockings that dolls wear nowadays being very thin, indeed.

Furthermore, whenever she is with them, it is now Mary Marble who does most of the explaining to Blind Benny of what is going on, because Mary Marble is such a doll as is just naturally bound to do all the explaining necessary when she is around.

When it comes to looks, Mary Marble is practically no dice.

In fact, if she is not the homeliest doll on Broadway, I will guarantee she is no worse than a dead-heat with the homeliest. She has a large beezer and large feet, and her shape is nothing whatever to speak of, and Regret, the horse player, says they never need to be afraid of entering Mary Marble in a claiming race at any price. But of course Regret is such a guy as will not give you a counterfeit dime for any doll, no matter what she looks like.

Mary Marble is maybe twenty-five years old—although Regret says he will lay 6 to 5 against her being any better than twenty-eight—and about all she has running for her, anyway you take her, is a voice that is soft and gentle and very nice, indeed, except that she is fond of using it more than somewhat.

She comes from a little town over in Pennsylvania, and is pretty well educated, and there is no doubt whatever that she is unusually respectable, because such a looking doll as Mary

Marble has no excuse for being anything but respectable on Broadway. In fact, Mary Marble is so respectable that many citizens figure there must be an angle, but it is agreed by one and all that she is perfectly safe with Little Yid and Blind Benny, no matter what.

And now at night instead of always doping the horse, Little Yid and Blind Benny will often sit up in their room talking about nothing much but Mary Marble, and Benny asks Yid a million questions over and over again.

'Tell me, Yid,' Blind Benny will say, 'what does Mary look like?'

'She is beautiful,' Yid always says.

Well, of course, this is practically perjury, and many citizens figure that Yid tells Blind Benny this very large lie because he has an idea Benny wishes to hear only the best about Mary Marble, although it comes out afterward that Little Yid thinks Mary Marble beautiful, at that.

'She is like an angel,' he says.

'Yes, yes,' Blind Benny says, 'tell me more.'

And Little Yid keeps on telling him, and if Mary Marble is only one-eighth as good-looking as Yid tells, Ziegfeld and Georgie White and Earl Carroll will be breaking each other's legs trying to get to her first.

'Well,' Blind Benny often says, after Little Yid gets through telling him about Mary Marble, 'she is just as I picture her to myself, Yid,' he says. 'I never care so much about not being able to see until now, and even now all I wish to see is Mary.'

The idea seems to be that Blind Benny is in love with Mary Marble, and the way Little Yid is always boosting her it is no wonder. In fact, the chances are a lot of other citizens will be in love with Mary Marble if they listen to Yid telling Blind Benny about her, and never get a gander at her personally.

But Blind Benny does not mention right out that he is in love with Mary Marble, and it may be that he does not really know what is eating him, which is often the case with guys who are in love. All Blind Benny knows is that he likes to be with Mary Marble and to listen to her explaining things to him, and, what is more, Mary Marble seems to like to be with Blind Benny, and to explain things to him, although as far as this goes Mary Marble is such a doll as likes to be explaining things to anybody any time she gets a chance.

Now Little Yid and Blind Benny are still an entry at all times, even when Mary Marble is with them, but many citizens see that Little Yid is getting all sorrowed up, and they figure it is because he feels Blind Benny is gradually drifting away from him after all these years, and everybody sympathizes with Little Yid no little, and there is some talk of getting him another blind guy to steer around in case Blind Benny finally leaves him for good.

Then it comes on a Saturday night when Little Yid says he must go over to Hoboken to see his brothers about the cap business and, as Mary Marble has to work in the stocking joint Saturday nights, Little Yid asks Blind Benny to go with him.

Of course Blind Benny does not care two cents about the cap business, but Little Yid explains to him that he knows a Dutchman's in Hoboken where there is some very nice real beer, and if there is one thing Blind Benny likes more than somewhat it is nice real beer, especially as it seems that since they become acquainted with Mary Marble he seldom gets nice real beer, as Mary Marble is a terrible knocker against such matters as nice real beer.

So they start for Hoboken, and Little Yid sees his brothers about the cap business, and then he takes Blind Benny to a Dutchman's to get the nice real beer, only it turns out that the beer is not real, and by no means nice, being all needled up with alky, and full of headaches, and one thing and another. But of course Little Yid and Blind Benny are not going around complaining about beer even if it is needled, as, after all, needled beer is better than no beer whatever.

They sit around the Dutchman's quite a while, although it turns out that the Dutchman is nothing but a Polack, and then they nab a late ferryboat for home, as Little Yid says he wishes to ride on a ferryboat to get the breeze. As far as Blind Benny is concerned, he does not care how they go as long as he can get back to New York to meet up with Mary Marble when she is through work.

There are not many citizens on the ferryboat with them, because it is getting on towards midnight, and at such an hour anybody who lives in Jersey is home in bed. In fact, there are not over four or five other passengers on the ferryboat with Little Yid and Blind Benny, and these passengers are all dozing on the benches in the smoking-room with their legs stuck out in front of them.

Now if you know anything about a ferryboat you know that they always hook big gates across each end of such a boat to keep automobiles and trucks and citizens and one thing and another from going off these ends into the water when the ferryboat is travelling back and forth, as naturally it will be a great nuisance to other boats in the river to have things falling off the ferryboats and clogging up the stream.

Well, Little Yid is away out on the end of the ferryboat up against the gate enjoying the breeze, and Blind Benny is leaning against the rail just outside the smoking-room door where Little Yid plants him when they get on the boat, and Blind Benny is smoking a big heater that he gets at the Dutchman's and maybe thinking of Mary Marble, when all of a sudden Little Yid yells like this:

'Oh, Benny,' he yells, 'come here.'

Naturally Benny turns and goes in the direction of the voice and Little Yid's voice comes from the stern, and Blind Benny keeps following his beezer in the direction of the voice, expecting to feel Little Yid's hand stopping him any

minute, and the next thing he knows he is walking right off the ferryboat into the river.

Of course Blind Benny cannot continue walking after he hits the water, so he sinks at once, making a sound like glug-glug as he goes down. It is in the fall of the year, and the water is by no means warm, so as Benny comes up for air he naturally lets out a loud squawk, but by this time the ferryboat is quite some jumps away from him, and nobody seems to see him, or even hear him.

Now Blind Benny cannot swim a lick, so he sinks again with a glug-glug. He comes up once more, and this time he does not squawk so loud, but he sings out, very distinct, as follows: 'Good-bye, Pal Yid.'

All of a sudden there is quite a splash in the water near the ferryboat, and Little Yid is swimming for Blind Benny so fast the chances are he will make a sucker of Johnny Weissmuller if Johnny happens to be around, for Little Yid is a regular goldfish when it comes to water, although he is not much of a hand for going swimming without provocation.

He has to dive for Blind Benny, for by this time Blind Benny is going down for the third time, and everybody knows that a guy is only allowed three downs when he is drowning. In fact, Blind Benny is almost down where the crabs live before Little Yid can get a fistful of his collar. At first Little Yid's idea is to take Blind Benny by the hair, but he remembers in time that Benny does not have much hair, so he compromises on the collar.

And being a little guy, Yid has quite a job getting Benny to the top and keeping him there. By this time the ferryboat is almost at its dock on the New York side, and nobody on board seems to realize that it is shy a couple of passengers, although of course the ferryboat company is not going to worry about that as it collects the fares in advance.

But it is a pretty lucky break for Little Yid and Blind Benny that a tugboat happens along and picks them up, or Yid may be swimming around the North River to this day with Blind Benny by the nape of the neck going glug-glug.

The captain of the tugboat is a kind old guy with whiskers by the name of Deusenberg, and he is very sorry indeed to see them in such a situation, so after he hauls them on board the tugboat, and spreads them out on bunks to let them dry, he throws a couple of slugs of gin into Little Yid and Blind Benny, it being gin of such a nature that they are half sorry they do not go ahead and drown before they meet up with it.

Then the captain unloads them at Forty-second Street on the New York side, and by this time, between the water and the gin, Blind Benny is very much fagged out, indeed, and in bad shape generally, so Little Yid puts him in a cab and takes him to a hospital.

Well, for several days Blind Benny is not better than even money to get well, because after they get the water out of him they still have to contend with the gin, and Mary Marble is around carrying on quite some, and saying she does not see how Little Yid can be so careless as to let Benny walk off

the end of a ferryboat when there are gates to prevent such a thing, or how he can let Benny drink tugboat gin, and many citizens do not see either, especially about the gin.

As for Little Yid, he is looking very sad, and is at the hospital at all times, and finally, one day when Blind Benny is feeling all right again, Little Yid sits down beside his bed, and speaks to him as follows:

'Benny,' Little Yid says, 'I will now make a confession to you, and I will then go away somewhere and knock myself off. Benny,' he says, 'I let you fall into the river on purpose. In fact,' Little Yid says, 'I unhook the gate across the passageway and call you, figuring you will follow the sound of my voice and walk on off the boat into the water.

'I am very sorry about this,' Little Yid says, 'but, Benny,' he says, 'I love Mary Marble more than somewhat, although I never before mention this to a soul. Not even to Mary Marble, because,' Little Yid says, 'I know she loves you, as you love her. I love her,' Little Yid says, 'from the night we first meet, and this love winds up by making me a little daffy.

'I get to thinking,' Little Yid says, 'that with you out of the way Mary Marble will turn to me and love me instead. But,' he says, starting to shed large tears, 'when I hear your voice from the water saying "Good-bye, Pal Yid," my heart begins to break, and I must jump in after you. So now you know, and I will go away and shoot myself through the head if I can find somebody to lend me a Roscoe, because I am no good.'

'Why,' Blind Benny says, 'Pal Yid, what you tell me about leading me into the river is no news to me. In fact,' he says, 'I know it the minute I hit the water because, although I am blind, I see many things as I am going down, and I see very plain that you must do this thing on purpose, because I know you are close enough around to grab me if you wish.

'I know, of course,' Blind Benny says, 'that there is bound to be a gate across the end of the boat because I often fix this gate when we are leaving Hoboken. So,' he says, 'I see that you must unhook this gate. I see that for some reason you wish to knock me off, although I do not see the reason, and the chances are I will never see it unless you tell me now, so I do not put up more of a holler and maybe attract the attention of the other guys on the boat. I am willing to let it all go as it lays.'

'My goodness,' Little Yid says, 'this is most surprising to me, indeed. In fact,' he says, 'I scarcely know what to say, Benny. In fact,' he says, 'I cannot figure out why you are willing to go without putting up a very large beef.'

'Well, Pal Yid,' Benny says, reaching out and taking Little Yid by the hand, 'I am so fond of you that I figure if my being dead is going to do you any good, I am willing to die, even though I do not know why. Although,' Benny says, 'it seems to me you can think up a nicer way of scragging me than by drowning, because you know I loathe and despise water. Now then,' he says, 'as for Mary Marble, if you—'

But Little Yid never lets Blind Benny finish this, because he cuts in and speaks as follows:

'Benny,' he says, 'if you are willing to die for me, I can certainly afford to give up a doll for you, especially,' he says, 'as my people tell me only yesterday that if I marry anybody who is not of my religion, which is slightly Jewish, they will chop me off at the pants' pocket. You take Mary Marble,' he says, 'and I will stake you to my blessing, and maybe a wedding present.'

So the upshot of the whole business is Mary Marble is now Mrs. Blind Benny, and Blind Benny seems to be very happy, indeed, although some citizens claim the explanations he gets nowadays of whatever is going on are much shorter than when he is with Little Yid, while Little Yid is over in Hoboken in the cap racket with his brothers, and he never sees Blind Benny any more, as Mary Marble still holds the gin against him.

Personally, I always consider Little Yid's conduct in this matter very self-sacrificing, and furthermore I consider him a very great hero for rescuing Blind Benny from the river, and I am saying as much only the other day to Regret the horse player.

'Yes,' Regret says, 'it sounds very self-sacrificing, indeed, and maybe Little Yid is a hero, at that, but,' Regret says, 'many citizens are criticizing him no little for sawing off such a crow as Mary Marble on a poor blind guy.'

Big Shoulders

One night I am sitting in Mindy's Restaurant on Broadway partaking of some delicious gefillte fish when a very beautiful young Judy comes in and sits down at my table and starts in sobbing as if her little heart will break.

I am about to call a waiter and have her chucked out of the place as her sobbing interferes with my enjoyment of the gefillte fish, when I observe that she is nobody but Zelma Bodinski, the daughter of Blooch Bodinski, a character who is well known to one and all along Broadway as a small operator in betting matters.

Well, every time I see Zelma Bodinski, she always makes me think I am looking at a ghost, because she is a dead ringer for her mama, Zelma O'Dare, who once does a hot wiggle in the old Garden Café on Seventh Avenue a matter of some twenty-odd years back, and who confirms a general suspicion that she is none too bright by marrying Blooch Bodinski and going to live in the Bronx.

However, as near as anybody can figure out, they get along together pretty well down through the years, because all Zelma O'Dare ever says is yes and no, and this is enough for Blooch, who does not understand many longer words, anyway, and when Zelma finally dies of influenza, she leaves

him this daughter, who looks so much like her the chances are Blooch never misses the original.

This Blooch Bodinski is a short, fat, scary-looking little character who wears a derby hat and loud clothes when he marries Zelma O'Dare, and who always has a sad expression, and he does not change much in appearance as he grows older, except maybe to look sadder.

He comes up out of Essex Street to Broadway, and he does this and that, and one thing and another, to make a living, until finally he gets to taking bets on prize fights and baseball games, and scalping the bets. That is, if somebody gives Blooch a bet on a proposition, right away he hustles around and gets somebody else to take it off his hands, generally at a shade better price than Blooch gives in the first place.

Besides, he knocks off five per cent. on a winning bet as his commission for his trouble, so he really is nothing but a sort of middleman, or broker, though what he calls himself is a betting commissioner. He never risks anything on his own account, no matter what, because Blooch is a very careful character by nature, and about as loose as concrete with his money.

So it gets around that you can always place a bet on almost any proposition through Blooch Bodinski, and that he is an honest character and always pays off, and by and by Blooch opens an office and goes grinding and chiselling along in a modest way for quite a spell, making a few dibs here and

there, and having Zelma O'Dare stash them away in a jug uptown against a rainy day.

I hear Blooch has quite a package planted when the jug fails and he is knocked out and has to start all over again, and there is rumour around and about that things are none too good for Blooch at the time I am speaking of. He still has his office, and his credit remains A1 with the trade all over the country, and anybody will accept a commission from Blooch because they know he never offers any bets he cannot guarantee, but the trouble is most of his old customers are also pretty well out of money, and new customers are scarce.

Anyway, here is Blooch Bodinski's daughter sobbing in Mindy's Restaurant, so naturally I ask her what ails her, and Zelma looks at me out of her big, black, wet eyes that are blacker than ever, what with the tears making the mascara run, and she says to me like this:

'It is Poppa,' she says. 'Poppa wishes me to marry Jake Applebaum, the druggist, and I hate druggists, especially when they are Jake Applebaum. Poppa wishes me to marry Jake because he owes Jake ten thousand dollars borrowed money, and Jake is getting tough about it.'

'Jake Applebaum already has ten thousand dollars,' I say. 'Twice,' I say. 'Maybe five or ten times. Jake Applebaum is fatter than a goose when it comes to money. Besides,' I say, 'Jake Applebaum is not hard to take. He is by no means bad-looking. He has a kind heart, unless you are asking him for

dough. In fact, somebody tells me that you and Jake are almost an entry.'

'Yes,' she says, 'I promised to marry him six months back. This is why he lends Poppa the ten thousand, which Poppa needs for the overhead. Up to yesterday, I practically love Jake Applebaum. Then I meet Charley.'

Well, I do not ask her Charley who, as I figure it may be one of those knock-knock things, and anyway, I can see that if I just let her talk I will get the whole story. I am thinking of the difference between her and her mama, Zelma O'Dare, who never makes a longer speech than to say she will have another rye high, but who foals a chatter-box.

'Charley is a Yale,' Zelma says. 'He is very handsome and full of fun and not like Jake Applebaum, who only thinks of betting on something when he is not thinking of his drugstore.'

'Jake makes a nice bet, at that,' I say. 'But where do you meet this Charley and what happens?'

'He comes into Poppa's office yesterday,' Zelma says. 'You know I am working in Poppa's office since last summer because Poppa cannot afford a regular office girl just now. I wish you could see his eyes. They are blue-grey. I am glad the baseball season is over because I get sick and tired of sitting there all day long telephoning bets on the Giants and the Yankees and the Cubs and Joe Louis, to Brad Cross in Fort Worth, and Dutch Ambrose in Omaha, and Izzy Harter

in Indianapolis. They get awfully fresh with you. I mean the people in Izzy Harter's office.'

'You are speaking of Charley's eyes,' I say.

'Oh, yes,' Zelma says. 'He wishes to make a small bet on the Yales to beat the Princetons to-morrow. Somebody sends him to Poppa's office thinking we take football bets. Poppa is not there, so he talks to me. I tell him we not only do not take football bets but that it makes Poppa mad to even mention them, because he thinks football is silly. Poppa says football is nothing but a lot of big shoulders, and zing-boom-bah, and that anybody who bets on such a matter is a sucker.

'Well,' Zelma says, 'Charley says Poppa is wrong, and that he is making a big mistake not to take football bets. He says football is the coming big-betting proposition of this country. He talks to me four hours. He is a poor boy and works his way through college. This is his last year. He says I look like Mona Lisa, and he likes my shape.'

'Well,' I say, 'the bloke is no chump about some things, anyway, although I cannot say much for his idea of betting on the Yales to beat the Princetons. The Princetons are one-to-four favourites in the betting.'

'Yes,' Zelma says, 'Charley says it is a wonderful opportunity for everybody to get rich betting on the Yales. He says he is only sorry he does not have more than ten dollars to bet on them. He says they cannot possibly lose. He says he personally dopes the game for the Yales to win. I ask

him if he is certain, and he crosses his heart and hopes to die if it is not the truth. I am going to tell Poppa about it as soon as I get back to the office. Just think,' Zelma says, 'Poppa can win enough money on this game to pay Jake Applebaum back and then give me some so Charley and I can get married and go into business.'

'Just a minute,' I say. 'Does Charley ask you to marry him already?'

'Why, sure,' Zelma says. 'Do I not tell you we talk four hours? What else is there to talk about so long? He goes on to Princeton to the game, and he is coming back here as soon as he can and take me to dinner. He plays substitute in the game, and he simply has to be there. But now I must go back to the office and tell Poppa what a wonderful opportunity this is for him.'

Well, I figure that listening to Blooch Bodinski when he is propositioned to bet his own money on something, and especially a football game, will make Broadway history, so I tell Zelma I wish to see her papa about a little business matter, and I go with her to Blooch's office, which at this time is a rat-hole in an old building in West Forty-ninth Street, with just a desk and a couple of chairs and only one telephone in it, and as we come in, Blooch is slamming the receiver back on the hook and talking out loud to himself.

'Big shoulders!' Blooch is saying to himself. 'Zing-boom-bah, eight to five.' Then he sees me, and he says to me like this: 'Baseball, yes,' Blooch says. 'Prize fights, yes. Hockey,

yes. Elections, yes. Big shoulders, no. Fifty times a day they call asking for prices on Mr. Minnesota, or Mr. Wisconsin, or somebody. I am about crazy. What do I know about prices on the big shoulders?'

'Why, Poppa,' Zelma says, 'Charley says it is your duty to hire college parties who can handicap the games for you, and get out your own prices and make your own book. Charley says most of the betting figures on the football games are a joke, and that if he is in the business he can get rich taking bets at his own prices and then catching the other fellows out of line and laying the bets off to them at their odds.'

Well, Blooch Bodinski looks at her for a minute without saying a word, and Zelma goes right ahead as follows:

'Charley says football betting is in its infancy,' she says. 'But the big thing is about the Yales to-morrow,' she says. 'Charley says they cannot possibly lose to the Princetons, and you can make yourself well off for life by betting on them.'

'Charley?' Blooch says. 'Charley what?'

At this Zelma pauses to think, but she is never much of a hand at thinking, just like her mama, Zelma O'Dare, so she soon gives it up and says like this: 'I forget what,' she says. 'Maybe he never tells me. Anyway, you are to bet on the Yales. Charley says they are like wheat in the bin.'

Well, Blooch finally shakes his head and looks at me and says: 'Yes, I am crazy. The big shoulders get me at last. What

are the Yales?' he says.

'They are four to one,' I say.

Well, at this, Blooch drops his head on the desk and groans, and I can see that he is overcome at the idea that anybody in this whole world thinks he will bet on a 4-to-1 shot, but Zelma pays no attention to him and goes right on gabbing.

'Charley says college football and Presidential elections are the only things it is safe to bet on,' she says. 'Charley says they are the only propositions that give you a dead-square rattle. Charley says nobody can cheat you in college football or Presidential elections.'

Blooch raises his head and sits there looking at her as if he never sees her before in his life, and moreover he acts as if he does not hear a word she says for a while. But finally, when Zelma has to stop for breath, he holds up one hand to keep her from starting off again and says like this:

'My own daughter,' he says, 'she wishes me to bet my own dough on something. The whole world is crazy. Listen,' Blooch says. 'For nearly thirty years I grind along in this town and never do I risk a single dib of my own on a bet. I take it off the top, or I take it off the bottom. Always something for nothing is my motto. And if ever I do bet it will not be on the big shoulders, and what is more, Jake Applebaum is in here a little while ago about you standing him up last night, so,' Blooch says, 'never you mind about somebody called Charley.'

'He loves me,' Zelma says.

'So he tells me,' Blooch says.

'I mean Charley loves me,' Zelma says.

Then all of a sudden Zelma begins sobbing again, and I wish to say that when it comes to a job of sobbing she is much better than a raw hand, and between sobs she says she works hard all summer in this dirty old office, taking the insults of people over the telephone, and she never gets to go anywhere or see anything, and she wishes she is dead, and if her poppa loves her as he claims he does, he will take her to see the Yales and the Princetons play, even if he refuses a chance to bet on an absolutely sure thing like the Yales.

Well, I can see that these tears make Blooch Bodinski very uneasy, and he says there, there, and now, now, and my, my to Zelma, but she only sobs all the harder, and says for two cents she will pitch herself off the new Tri-Boro bridge, and finally Blooch is almost crying himself, and he pats Zelma on the head with his hand and says to her like this:

'Why,' Blooch says, 'I remember hearing Jake Applebaum say he is going to this very game, and I know he will be glad to take you. I will call Jake up at once if you will just stop crying.'

Now I claim Zelma is sobbing right up there around the record from the beginning, but when Blooch says this she turns on a notch higher and says it shows her that her poppa

does not love her at all to wish to shove her off on Jake Applebaum when she has only one desire in the world and this is to be with her only parent, so finally Blooch says all right, he will go around to Jack's ticket office and see if he can buy some tickets to the game, on condition that I go along.

Well, naturally, Zelma has no reason to bar me, so there we are the next morning taking a special train to Princeton, and I remember seeing Jake Applebaum at a distance in the Pennsylvania Station before we start, but he does not see us, and I also remember that Zelma seems to manoeuvre us around so we do not make the same train that Jake does, or connect with him when we hit Princeton.

Blooch dozes most of the way, because it seems he is awake most of the night worrying about the way Zelma is acting towards Jake Applebaum, and I sit in a seat with Zelma and listen to her talk about Charley. I also listen to what some of the other characters in our Pullman are saying, and although most of them seem to be Yales, I judge that they figure this game is just a breeze for the Princetons, and I say as much to Zelma.

'No,' she says, 'they are wrong. Charley says the Yales are a cinch. Charley says the handicapping of football teams so you can determine the winner of a game is an exact science and not mere guesswork as many people may think, and,' Zelma says, 'Charley says he applies scientific methods to handicapping this game, and he makes it close but certain for the Yales.'

She places so much faith in what Charley says that I am wondering if maybe I am making a mistake in not taking advantage of the price, for if there is anything I dearly love it is a long shot, and in football 4 to 1 is a very long shot indeed, and they do not often get down there in front. Then I remember that some handicappers who are maybe about as smart as Charley make this price, so I decide I am just as well off keeping my dough in my kick, although I do not speak of this to Zelma.

Blooch wakes up when our special pulls into Princeton, and we get off and start walking to the football yard with the rest of the crowd, and I am thinking that these scenes must be quite a novelty to him, when we pass a bunch of characters who are offering to buy or sell tickets to the game, and who are what is known as ticket hustlers, and a couple of old characters among them give Blooch a blow, and he stops to talk to them. When he joins us again, Blooch is smiling, and he says to me like this:

'I hustle duckets with those parties among these same crowds over twenty years ago,' he says. 'They remember old Blooch. I am a champion in those days, too.'

He livens up quite some after this and begins taking an interest in his surroundings and talking about the good old days, but as near as I can make out, Blooch's good old days are about the same as everybody else's good old days, and most of the time he is half starving.

Well, by this time Zelma is paying no attention whatever to us, but is looking all around and about, and I can see that she is hoping she may get a swivel at Charley, but naturally he is not to be seen, so she does the next best thing and takes to looking at other young characters who are quite numerous all over the place, and they look right back at her, if anybody asks you, and personally I do not blame them. She is the prettiest thing that ever steps in shoe leather this particular day, what with her eyes shining, and her cheeks red with excitement, and all this and that.

Our seats in the football stadium are not so good because they are right behind the goal-posts at one end of the field, and close to the ground, and we are not able to see a whole lot of the game, especially when the ball is in the middle of the field or down towards the other end, and Zelma is disappointed no little and Blooch is saying he will see Jack when he gets home about this, but personally I do not care where we are as long as we are at a football game, because football is one of my favourite dishes. Even Blooch partakes of the general excitement when we get settled down, and the bands play, and the young characters in the stands begin letting out cheers.

Zelma keeps watching the Yales' bench trying to locate Charley, but we are too far away for her to see good, and anyway, the game gets going and takes her attention, especially as right away the Princetons start running all over the Yales in a most disquieting manner.

I can see in about two plays why the Princetons are 1-to-4 favourites, and I say to Zelma like this:

'I am afraid Charley is wrong,' I say. 'This looks as if it may be murder.'

'Never fear,' Zelma says. 'Charley gives me his word the Yales will win.'

'Where are the big shoulders?' Blooch says. 'These parties are a lot of midgets.'

Well, all of a sudden the Yales commence playing better football, and instead of running over them, the Princetons now have a tough time keeping from getting run over themselves, and the game goes this way and that way, and nothing happens in the way of a score, and the Yales in the stands are in quite a hubbub, and are singing Boolaboola and I do not know what all else, and Zelma is jumping up and down and shrieking, 'Charley is right!'

All the time she is trying to locate Charley on the field or on the side lines, but there seems to be no Charley, and I am commencing to wonder if some character does not play a joke on her.

She is somewhat downhearted when the second half starts and Charley remains invisible, although she is still confident that the Yales will win. Personally, I figure a tie is about the answer.

Well, it is getting on towards the end of the game, and the goal in front of us belongs at this time to the Princetons, and the Yales start a march that winds up with them losing the ball on downs on the Princetons' one-inch line, and everybody is half insane, especially Zelma, and even Blooch Bodinski is saying out loud to the Yales: 'Come on, big shoulders!'

But it is no go, and it is coming on dark when the Yales lose the ball, and one of the Yales gets hurt on the last play, and there is a substitution, and when they line up again one of the Princetons goes back behind his own goal to kick out of danger, and he is standing just a short distance from where we are sitting waiting for the pass.

Then, just as the ball is flipped to the Princeton back of the line, Zelma Bodinski lets out a shriek like a steam whistle, because it seems that she just spots the last Yale substitute, and she screams as follows: 'Char-lee!'

Well, afterward I read what the reporters say about the darkness and the slippery ball and all this and that, but it seems to me that I see the Princeton character back of the line jump at the scream and half turn his head, and the next thing anybody knows he drops the football out of his hands, and then as all the Yales are coming at him, he falls on it behind his own goal for what is called a safety, and this means two points against the Princetons.

And a few seconds later the whistle blows, and there the Princetons are, licked by the Yales by a score of two to

nothing, which is very discouraging to the Princetons, to be sure. Naturally, there are some great goings-on over this business among the Yales, and nobody is more delighted than Zelma Bodinski, and I hear her saying to Blooch like this:

'Well,' Zelma says, 'now everything is all right. Jake Applebaum is paid off, and we have all the money we need. I am glad, because it proves Charley is right.'

'What do you mean Jake Applebaum is paid off?' Blooch says. 'And what do you mean we have all the money we need? If you do not marry Jake, we will be on relief in a month.'

'Oh,' Zelma says, 'I forget to tell you. This morning before we leave New York, I go to the office and call up Dutch Ambrose and Brad Cross and Izzy Harter and bet them two thousand dollars each in your name on Yale at four to one. Then I happen to have a date with Jake Applebaum the night before, and I tell him you have a commission of two thousand dollars from out of town to place on the Yales at the best price you can get, and Jake says he will lay five to one, because it is just the same as finding the two thousand in the street.

'So,' Zelma says, 'we pay off Jake and win twenty-four thousand in cash. Even if we lose,' she says, 'the most we can lose is eight thousand dollars, but I know that Charley says there is no chance of our losing. I will always believe Charley all my life, no matter what.'

Well, Blooch stands there as if he is thinking this over, and there is a very strange expression on his face, and about this time who comes up but Jake Applebaum, and it is plain to be seen that Jake is very angry, and he shakes his finger in Zelma Bodinski's beautiful face and says to her like this:

'See here,' Jake says. 'I hear all about you this morning when I am at breakfast in Mindy's. I hear all about you being in love with a Yale by the name of Charley, and now I know why you are jerking me around. But do not forget your old man owes me plenty, and I will make him hard to catch.'

Naturally, Jake's statement is most uncouth, and Zelma is starting to turn on the sobs, when a large young character in football clothes approaches, and I can see that he is nobody but the Princeton who fumbles the ball, and I can also see that he seems to be slightly perturbed as he says to us like this:

'Where is the pancake who sings out Charley over here? My name is Charley.'

Well, personally, I do not care for his attitude, and I do not think it shows proper college training for him to be speaking of pancakes, but before *I* can decide what to do about the situation, Jake Applebaum steps forward and says:

'Oh, so you are Charley, are you, you snake in the grass? Well, my lady friend here that you try to steal from me is the one who sings out. Why?' Jake says. 'What do you wish to make of it?'

'Only this!' the football character says, and then he lets go as neat a left hook as ever I could wish to behold and stretches Jake as flat as a pancake, and immediately disappears in the dusk.

We leave Jake there and start walking back to the railroad, and all this time Blooch never says a word but seems to be thinking of something, and finally he turns to Zelma and speaks as follows:

'You mean to say I stand to lose eight thousand of my own money on a four-to-one shot in this game?' Blooch says.

'Yes, Poppa,' Zelma says, 'you can figure it in such a way. But Charley says—'

Then without finishing she lets out a scream, because Blooch falls in a dead faint and starts rolling down a little hill, and the chances are he will be rolling yet if a big blond young character does not come leaping out of the dusk to grab him and set him on his pins again and shake him out of his faint. At the sight of this young character Zelma lets out another scream and says like this:

'Char-lee!'

So now Blooch Bodinski has a big suite of offices, and fifty telephones, and he calls himself the Flannagan Brokerage Company and makes the biggest football book in this country, and everybody along Broadway is pretty jealous about this, although Mindy, the restaurant man, says: 'Well,

you must give Blooch credit for digging up Charley Flannagan, the best football handicapper in the world, for a son-in-law.'

And every time Blooch looks at Charley he nods his head to show he approves him, and sometimes Blooch says out loud: 'Big shoulders!'

That Ever-Loving Wife of Hymie's

If anybody ever tells me I will wake up some morning to find myself sleeping with a horse, I will consider them very daffy indeed, especially if they tell me it will be with such a horse as old Mahogany, for Mahogany is really not much horse. In fact, Mahogany is nothing but an old bum, and you can say it again, and many horse players wish he is dead ten thousand times over.

But I will think anybody is daffier still if they tell me I will wake up some morning to find myself sleeping with Hymie Banjo Eyes, because as between Mahogany and Hymie Banjo Eyes to sleep with, I will take Mahogany every time, even though Mahogany snores more than somewhat when he is sleeping. But Mahogany is by no means as offensive to sleep with as Hymie Banjo Eyes, as Hymie not only snores

when he is sleeping, but he hollers and kicks around and takes on generally.

He is a short, pudgy little guy who is called Hymie Banjo Eyes because his eyes bulge out as big and round as banjos, although his right name is Weinstein, or some such, and he is somewhat untidy-looking in spots, for Hymie Banjo Eyes is a guy who does not care if his breakfast gets on his vest, or what. Furthermore, he gabs a lot and thinks he is very smart, and many citizens consider him a pest, in spades. But personally I figure Hymie Banjo Eyes as very harmless, although he is not such a guy as I will ordinarily care to have much truck with.

But there I am one morning waking up to find myself sleeping with both Mahogany and Hymie, and what are we sleeping in but a horse car bound for Miami, and we are passing through North Carolina in a small-time blizzard when I wake up, and Mahogany is snoring and shivering, because it seems Hymie cops the poor horse's blanket to wrap around himself, and I am half frozen and wishing I am back in Mindy's Restaurant on Broadway, where all is bright and warm, and that I never see either Mahogany or Hymie in my life.

Of course it is not Mahogany's fault that I am sleeping with him and Hymie, and in fact, for all I know, Mahogany may not consider me any bargain whatever to sleep with. It is Hymie's fault for digging me up in Mindy's one night and explaining to me how wonderful the weather is in Miami in the winter-time, and how we can go there for the races with

his stable and make plenty of potatoes for ourselves, although of course I know when Hymie is speaking of his stable he means Mahogany, for Hymie never has more than one horse at any one time in his stable.

Generally it is some broken-down lizard that he buys for about the price of an old wool hat and patches up the best he can, as Hymie Banjo Eyes is a horse trainer by trade, and considering the kind of horses he trains he is not a bad trainer, at that. He is very good indeed at patching up cripples and sometimes winning races with them until somebody claims them on him or they fall down dead, and then he goes and gets himself another cripple and starts all over again.

I hear he buys Mahogany off a guy by the name of O'Shea for a hundred bucks, although the chances are if Hymie waits a while the guy will pay him at least two hundred to take Mahogany away and hide him, for Mahogany has bad legs and bum feet, and is maybe nine years old, and does not win a race since the summer of 1924, and then it is an accident. But anyway, Mahogany is the stable Hymie Banjo Eyes is speaking of taking to Miami when he digs me up in Mindy's.

'And just think,' Hymie says, 'all we need to get there is the price of a drawing-room on the Florida Special.'

Well, I am much surprised by this statement, because it is the first time I ever hear of a horse needing a drawing-room, especially such a horse as Mahogany, but it seems the drawing-room is not to be for Mahogany, or even for Hymie

or me. It seems it is to be for Hymie's ever-loving wife, a blonde doll by the name of 'Lasses, which he marries out of some night-club where she is what is called an adagio dancer.

It seems that when 'Lasses is very young somebody once says she is just as sweet as Molasses, and this is how she comes to get the name of 'Lasses, although her right name is Maggie Something, and I figure she must change quite a lot since they begin calling her 'Lasses because at the time I meet her she is sweet just the same as green grapefruit.

She has a partner in the adagio business by the name of Donaldo, who picks her up and heaves her around the night-club as if she is nothing but a baseball, and it is very thrilling indeed to see Donaldo giving 'Lasses a sling as if he is going to throw her plumb away, which many citizens say may not be a bad idea, at that, and then catching her by the foot in mid-air and hauling her back to him.

But one night it seems that Donaldo takes a few slugs of gin before going into this adagio business, and he muffs 'Lasses' foot, although nobody can see how this is possible, because 'Lasses' foot is no more invisible than a box car, and 'Lasses keeps on sailing through the air. She finally sails into Hymie Banjo Eyes' stomach as he is sitting at a table pretty well back, and this is the way Hymie and 'Lasses meet, and a romance starts, although it is nearly a week before Hymie recovers enough from the body beating he takes off 'Lasses to go around and see her.

The upshot of the romance is 'Lasses and Hymie get married, although up to the time Donaldo slings her into Hymie's stomach, 'Lasses is going around with Brick McCloskey, the bookmaker, and is very loving with him indeed, but they have a row about something and are carrying the old torch for each other when Hymie happens along.

Some citizens say the reason 'Lasses marries Hymie is because she is all sored up on Brick and that she acts without thinking, as dolls often do, especially blonde dolls, although personally I figure Hymie takes all the worst of the situation, as 'Lasses is not such a doll as any guy shall marry without talking it over with his lawyer. 'Lasses is one of these little blondes who is full of short answers, and personally I will just as soon marry a porcupine. But Hymie loves her more than somewhat, and there is no doubt Brick McCloskey is all busted up because 'Lasses takes this run-out powder on him, so maybe after all 'Lasses has some kind of appeal which I cannot notice off-hand.

'But,' Hymie explains to me when he is speaking to me about this trip to Miami, ' 'Lasses is not well, what with nerves and one thing and another, and she will have to travel to Miami along with her Pekingese dog, Sooey-pow, because,' Hymie says, 'it will make her more nervous than somewhat if she has to travel with anybody else. And of course,' Hymie says, 'no one can expect 'Lasses to travel in anything but a drawing-room on account of her health.'

Well, the last time I see 'Lasses she is making a sucker of a big sirloin in Bobby's Restaurant, and she strikes me as a pretty healthy doll, but of course I never examine her close, and anyway, her health is none of my business.

'Now,' Hymie says, 'I get washed out at Empire, and I am pretty much in hock here and there and have no dough to ship my stable to Miami, but,' he says, 'a friend of mine is shipping several horses there and he has a whole car, and he will kindly let me have room in one end of the car for my stable, and you and I can ride in there, too.

'That is,' Hymie says, 'we can ride in there if you will dig up the price of a drawing-room and the two tickets that go with it so 'Lasses' nerves will not be disturbed. You see,' Hymie says, 'I happen to know you have two hundred and fifty bucks in the jug over here on the corner, because one of the tellers in the jug is a friend of mine, and he tips me off you have this sugar, even though,' Hymie says, 'you have it in there under another name.'

Well, a guy goes up against many daffy propositions as he goes along through life, and the first thing I know I am waking up, like I tell you, to find myself sleeping with Mahogany and Hymie, and as I lay there in the horse car slowly freezing to death, I get to thinking of 'Lasses in a drawing-room on the Florida Special, and I hope and trust that she and the Peke are sleeping nice and warm.

The train finally runs out of the blizzard and the weather heats up somewhat, so it is not so bad riding in the horse car,

and Hymie and I pass the time away playing two-handed pinochle. Furthermore, I get pretty well acquainted with Mahogany, and I find he is personally not such a bad old pelter as many thousands of citizens think.

Finally we get to Miami, and at first it looks as if Hymie is going to have a tough time finding a place to keep Mahogany, as all the stable room at the Hialeah track is taken by cash customers, and Hymie certainly is not a cash customer and neither is Mahogany. Personally, I am not worried so much about stable room for Mahogany as I am about stable room for myself, because I am now down to a very few bobs and will need same to eat on.

Naturally, I figure Hymie Banjo Eyes will be joining his ever-loving wife 'Lasses, as I always suppose a husband and wife are an entry, but Hymie tells me 'Lasses is parked in the Roney Plaza over on Miami Beach, and that he is going to stay with Mahogany, because it will make her very nervous to have people around her, especially people who are training horses every day, and who may not smell so good.

Well, it looks as if we will wind up camping out with Mahogany under a palm-tree, although many of the palm-trees are already taken by other guys camping out with horses, but finally Hymie finds a guy who has a garage back of his house right near the race track, and having no use for this garage since his car blows away in the hurricane of 1926, the guy is willing to let Hymie keep Mahogany in the garage. Furthermore, he is willing to let Hymie sleep in the garage with Mahogany, and pay him now and then.

So Hymie borrows a little hay and grain, such as horses love to eat, off a friend who has a big string at the track, and moves into the garage with Mahogany, and about the same time I run into a guy by the name of Pottsville Legs, out of Pottsville, Pa., and he has a room in a joint downtown, and I move in with him, and it is no worse than sleeping with Hymie Banjo Eyes and Mahogany, at that.

I do not see Hymie for some time after this, but I hear of him getting Mahogany ready for a race. He has the old guy out galloping on the track every morning, and who is galloping him but Hymie himself, because he cannot get any stable-boys to do the galloping for him, as they do not wish to waste their time. However, Hymie rides himself when he is a young squirt, so galloping Mahogany is not such a tough job for him, except that it gives him a terrible appetite, and it is very hard for him to find anything to satisfy this appetite with, and there are rumours around that Hymie is eating most of Mahogany's hay and grain.

In the meantime, I am going here and there doing the best I can, and this is not so very good, at that, because never is there such a terrible winter in Miami or so much suffering among the horse players. In the afternoon I go out to the race track, and in the evening I go to the dog tracks, and later to the gambling joints trying to pick up a few honest bobs, and wherever I go I seem to see Hymie's ever-loving wife 'Lasses, and she is always dressed up more than somewhat, and generally she is with Brick McCloskey, for Brick shows up in Miami figuring to do a little business in bookmaking at the track.

When they turn off the books there and put in the mutuels, Brick still does a little booking to big betters who do not wish to put their dough in the mutuels for fear of ruining a price, for Brick is a very large operator at all times. He is not only a large operator, but he is a big, good-looking guy, and how 'Lasses can ever give him the heave-o for such a looking guy as Hymie Banjo Eyes is always a great mystery to me. But then this is the way blondes are.

Of course Hymie probably does not know 'Lasses is running around with Brick McCloskey, because Hymie is too busy getting Mahogany ready for a race to make such spots as 'Lasses and Brick are apt to be, and nobody is going to bother to tell him, because so many ever-loving wives are running around with guys who are not their ever-loving husbands in Miami this winter that nobody considers it any news.

Personally, I figure 'Lasses' running around with Brick is a pretty fair break for Hymie, at that, as it takes plenty of weight off him in the way of dinners, and maybe breakfasts for all I know, although it seems to me 'Lasses cannot love Hymie as much as Hymie thinks to be running around with another guy. In fact, I am commencing to figure 'Lasses does not care for Hymie Banjo Eyes whatever.

Well, one day I am looking over the entries, and I see where Hymie has old Mahogany in a claiming race at a mile and an eighth, and while it is a cheap race, there are some pretty fair hides in it. In fact, I can figure at least eight out of

the nine that are entered to beat Mahogany by fourteen lengths.

Well, I go out to Hialeah very early, and I step around to the garage where Mahogany and Hymie are living, and Hymie is sitting out in front of the garage on a bucket looking very sad, and Mahogany has his beezer stuck out through the door of the garage, and he is looking even sadder than Hymie.

'Well,' I say to Hymie Banjo Eyes, 'I see the big horse goes to-day.'

'Yes,' Hymie says, 'the big horse goes to-day if I can get ten bucks for the jockey fee, and if I can get a jock after I get the fee. It is a terrible situation,' Hymie says. 'Here I get Mahogany all readied up for the race of his life in a spot where he can win by as far as from here to Palm Beach and grab a purse worth six hundred fish, and me without as much as a sawbuck to hire one of these hop-toads that are putting themselves away as jocks around here.'

'Well,' I say, 'why do you not speak to 'Lasses, your ever-loving wife, about this situation? I see 'Lasses playing the wheel out at Hollywood last night,' I say, 'and she has a stack of cheques in front of her a greyhound cannot hurdle, and,' I say, 'it is not like 'Lasses to go away from there without a few bobs off such a start.'

'Now there you go again,' Hymie says, very impatient indeed. 'You are always making cracks about 'Lasses, and

you know very well it will make the poor little doll very nervous if I speak to her about such matters as a sawbuck, because 'Lasses needs all the sawbucks she can get hold of to keep herself and Sooey-pow at the Roney Plaza. By the way,' Hymie says, 'how much scratch do you have on your body at this time?'

Well, I am never any hand for telling lies, especially to an old friend such as Hymie Banjo Eyes, so I admit I have a ten-dollar note, although naturally I do not mention another tenner which I also have in my pocket, as I know Hymie will wish both of them. He will wish one of my tenners to pay the jockey fee, and he will wish the other to bet on Mahogany, and I am certainly not going to let Hymie throw my dough away betting it on such an old crocodile as Mahogany, especially in a race which a horse by the name of Side Burns is a sure thing to win.

In fact, I am waiting patiently for several days for a chance to bet on Side Burns. So I hold out one sawbuck on Hymie, and then I go over to the track and forget all about him and Mahogany until the sixth race is coming up, and I see by the jockey board that Hymie has a jock by the name of Scroon riding Mahogany, and while Mahogany is carrying only one hundred pounds, which is the light-weight of the race, I will personally just as soon have Paul Whiteman up as Scroon. Personally I do not think Scroon can spell 'horse,' for he is nothing but a dizzy little guy who gets a mount about once every Pancake Tuesday. But of course Hymie is not a guy who can pick and choose his jocks, and the chances are he is pretty lucky to get anybody to ride Mahogany.

I see by the board where it tells you the approximate odds that Mahogany is 40 to 1, and naturally nobody is paying any attention to such a horse, because it will not be good sense to pay any attention to Mahogany in this race, what with it being his first start in months, and Mahogany not figuring with these horses, or with any horses, as far as this is concerned. In fact, many citizens think Hymie Banjo Eyes is either crazy, or is running Mahogany in this race for exercise, although nobody who knows Hymie will figure him to be spending dough on a horse just to exercise him.

The favourite in the race is this horse named Side Burns, and from the way they are playing him right from taw you will think he is Twenty Grand. He is even money on the board, and I hope and trust that he will finally pay as much as this, because at even money I consider him a very sound investment, indeed. In fact, I am willing to take 4 to 5 for my dough, and will consider it money well found, because I figure this will give me about eighteen bobs to bet on Tony Joe in the last race, and anybody will tell you that you can go to sleep on Tony Joe winning, unless something happens.

There is a little action on several other horses in the race, but of course there is none whatever for Mahogany and the last time I look he is up to fifty. So I buy my ticket on Side Burns, and go out to the paddock to take a peek at the horses, and I see Hymie Banjo Eyes in there saddling Mahogany with his jockey, this dizzy Scroon, standing alongside him in Hymie's colours of red, pink and yellow, and making wise-cracks to the guys in the next stall about Mahogany.

Hymie Banjo Eyes sees me and motions me to come into the paddock, so I go in and give Mahogany a pat on the snoot, and the old guy seems to remember me right away, because he rubs his beezer up and down my arm and lets out a little snicker. But it seems to me the old plug looks a bit peaked, and I can see his ribs very plain indeed, so I figure maybe there is some truth in the rumour about Hymie sharing Mahogany's hay and grain, after all.

Well, as I am standing there, Hymie gives this dizzy Scroon his riding instructions, and they are very short, for all Hymie says is as follows:

'Listen,' Hymie says, 'get off with this horse and hurry right home.'

And Scroon looks a little dizzier than somewhat and nods his head, and then turns and tips a wink to Kurtsinger, who is riding the horse in the next stall.

Well, finally the post bugle goes, and Hymie walks back with me to the lawn as the horses are coming out on the track, and Hymie is speaking about nothing but Mahogany.

'It is just my luck,' Hymie says, 'not to have a bob or two to bet on him. He will win this race as far as you can shoot a rifle, and the reason he will win this far,' Hymie says, 'is because the track is just soft enough to feel nice and soothing to his sore feet. Furthermore,' Hymie says, 'after lugging my one hundred and forty pounds around every morning for two

weeks, Mahogany will think it is Christmas when he finds nothing but this Scroon's one hundred pounds on his back.

'In fact,' Hymie says, 'if I do not need the purse money, I will not let him run to-day, but will hide him for a bet. But,' he says, ' 'Lasses must have five yards at once, and you know how nervous she will be if she does not get the five yards. So I am letting Mahogany run,' Hymie says, 'and it is a pity.'

'Well,' I say, 'why do you not promote somebody to bet on him for you?'

'Why,' Hymie says, 'if I ask one guy I ask fifty. But they all think I am out of my mind to think Mahogany can beat such horses as Side Burns and the rest. Well,' he says, 'they will be sorry. By the way,' he says, 'do you have a bet down of any kind?'

Well, now, I do not wish to hurt Hymie's feelings by letting him know I bet on something else in the race, so I tell him I do not play this race at all, and he probably figures it is because I have nothing to bet with after giving him the sawbuck. But he keeps on talking as we walk over in front of the grandstand, and all he is talking about is what a tough break it is for him not to have any dough to bet on Mahogany. By this time the horses are at the post a little way up the track, and as we are standing there watching them, Hymie Banjo Eyes goes on talking, half to me and half to himself, but out loud.

'Yes,' he says, 'I am the unluckiest guy in all the world. Here I am,' he says, 'with a race that is a kick in the pants for my horse at fifty to one, and me without a quarter to bet. It is certainly a terrible thing to be poor,' Hymie says. 'Why,' he says, 'I will bet my life on my horse in this race, I am so sure of winning. I will bet my clothes. I will bet all I ever hope to have. In fact,' he says, 'I will even bet my ever-loving wife, this is how sure I am.'

Now of course this is only the way horse players rave when they are good and heated up about the chances of a horse, and I hear such conversations as this maybe a million times, and never pay any attention to it whatever, but as Hymie makes this crack about betting his ever-loving wife, a voice behind us says as follows:

'Against how much?'

Naturally, Hymie and I look around at once, and who does the voice belong to but Brick McCloskey. Of course I figure Brick is kidding Hymie Banjo Eyes, but Brick's voice is as cold as ice as he says to Hymie like this:

'Against how much will you bet your wife your horse wins this race?' he says. 'I hear you saying you are sure this old buzzard meat you are running will win,' Brick says, 'so let me see how sure you are. Personally,' Brick says, 'I think they ought to prosecute you for running a broken-down hound like Mahogany on the ground of cruelty to animals, and furthermore,' Brick says, 'I think they ought to put you in an insane asylum if you really believe your old dog has a

chance. But I will give you a bet,' he says. 'How much do you wish me to lay against your wife?'

Well, this is very harsh language indeed, and I can see that Brick is getting something off his chest he is packing there for some time. The chances are he is putting the blast on poor Hymie Banjo Eyes on account of Hymie grabbing 'Lasses from him, and of course Brick McCloskey never figures for a minute that Hymie will take his question seriously. But Hymie answers like this:

'You are a price-maker,' he says. 'What do you lay?'

Now this is a most astonishing reply, indeed, when you figure that Hymie is asking what Brick will bet against Hymie's ever-loving wife 'Lasses, and I am very sorry to hear Hymie ask, especially as I happen to turn around and find that nobody but 'Lasses herself is listening in on the conversation, and the chances are her face will be very white, if it is not for her make-up, 'Lasses being a doll who goes in for make-up more than somewhat.

'Yes,' Brick McCloskey says, 'I am a price-maker, all right, and I will lay you a price. I will lay you five C's against your wife that your plug does not win,' he says.

Brick looks at 'Lasses as he says this, and 'Lasses looks at Brick, and personally I will probably take a pop at a guy who looks at my ever-loving wife in such a way, if I happen to have any ever-loving wife, and maybe I will take a pop at my ever-loving wife, too, if she looks back at a guy in such a

way, but of course Hymie is not noticing such things as looks at this time, and in fact he does not see 'Lasses as yet. But he does not hesitate in answering Brick.

'You are a bet,' says Hymie. 'Five hundred bucks against my ever-loving wife 'Lasses. It is a chiseller's price such as you always lay,' he says, 'and the chances are I can do better if I have time to go shopping around but as it is,' he says, 'it is like finding money and I will not let you get away. But be ready to pay cash right after the race, because I will not accept your paper.'

Well, I hear of many a strange bet on horse races, but never before do I hear of a guy betting his ever-loving wife, although to tell you the truth I never before hear of a guy getting the opportunity to bet his wife on a race. For all I know, if bookmakers take wives as a steady thing there will be much action in such matters at every track.

But I can see that both Brick McCloskey and Hymie Banjo Eyes are in dead earnest, and about this time 'Lasses tries to cop a quiet sneak, and Hymie sees her and speaks to her as follows:

'Hello, Baby,' Hymie says. 'I will have your five yards for you in a few minutes and five more to go with it, as I am just about to clip a sucker. Wait here with me, Baby,' Hymie says.

'No,' 'Lasses says, 'I am too nervous to wait here. I am going down by the fence to root your horse in,' she says, but

as she goes away I see another look pass between her and Brick McCloskey.

Well, all of a sudden Cassidy gets the horses in a nice line and lets them go, and as they come busting down past the stand the first time who is right there on top but old Mahogany, with this dizzy Scroon kicking at his skinny sides and yelling in his ears. As they make the first turn, Scroon has Mahogany a length in front, and he moves him out another length as they hit the back side.

Now I always like to watch the races from a spot away up the lawn, as I do not care to have anybody much around me when the tough finishes come along in case I wish to bust out crying, so I leave Hymie Banjo Eyes and Brick McCloskey still glaring at each other and go to my usual place, and who is standing there, too, all by herself but 'Lasses. And about this time the horses are making the turn into the stretch and Mahogany is still on top, but something is coming very fast on the outside. It looks as if Mahogany is in a tough spot, because half-way down the stretch the outside horse nails him and looks him right in the eye, and who is it but the favourite, Side Burns.

They come on like a team, and I am personally giving Side Burns a great ride from where I am standing, when I hear a doll yelling out loud, and who is the doll but 'Lasses, and what is she yelling but the following:

'Come on with him, jock!'

Furthermore, as she yells, 'Lasses snaps her fingers like a crap shooter and runs a couple of yards one way and then turns and runs a couple of yards back the other way, so I can see that 'Lasses is indeed of a nervous temperament, just as Hymie Banjo Eyes is always telling me, although up to this time I figure her nerves are the old alzo.

'Come on!' 'Lasses yells again. 'Let him roll!' she yells. 'Ride him, boy!' she yells. 'Come on with him, Frankie!'

Well, I wish to say that 'Lasses' voice may be all right if she is selling tomatoes from door to door, but I will not care to have her using it around me every day for any purpose whatever, because she yells so loud I have to move off a piece to keep my ear-drums from being busted wide open. She is still yelling when the horses go past the finish line, the snozzles of old Mahogany and Side Burns so close together that nobody can hardly tell which is which.

In fact, there is quite a wait before the numbers go up, and I can see 'Lasses standing there with her programme all wadded up in her fist as she watches the board, and I can see she is under a very terrible nervous strain indeed, and I am very sorry I go around thinking her nerves are the old alzo. Pretty soon the guy hangs out No. 9, and No. 9 is nobody but old Mahogany, and at this I hear 'Lasses screech, and all of a sudden she flops over in a faint, and somebody carries her under the grandstand to revive her, and I figure her nerves bog down entirely, and I am sorrier than ever for thinking bad thoughts of her.

I am also very, very sorry I do not bet my sawbuck on Mahogany, especially when the board shows he pays $102, and I can see where Hymie Banjo Eyes is right about the weight and all, but I am glad Hymie wins the purse and also the five C's off of Brick McCloskey and that he saves his ever-loving wife, because I figure Hymie may now pay me back a few bobs.

I do not see Hymie or Brick or 'Lasses again until the races are over, and then I hear of a big row going on under the stand, and go to see what is doing, and who is having the row but Hymie Banjo Eyes and Brick McCloskey. It seems that Hymie hits Brick a clout on the beezer that stretches Brick out, and it seems that Hymie hits Brick this blow because as Brick is paying Hymie the five C's he makes the following crack:

'I do not mind losing the dough to you, Banjo Eyes,' Brick says, 'but I am sore at myself for overlaying the price. It is the first time in all the years I am booking that I make such an overlay. The right price against your wife,' Brick says, 'is maybe two dollars and a half.'

Well, as Brick goes down with a busted beezer from Hymie's punch, and everybody is much excited, who steps out of the crowd around them and throws her arms around Hymie Banjo Eyes but his ever-loving wife 'Lasses, and as she kisses Hymie smack-dab in the mush, 'Lasses says as follows:

'My darling Hymie,' she says, 'I hear what this big flannel-mouth says about the price on me, and,' she says, 'I am only sorry you do not cripple him for life. I know now I love you, and only you, Hymie,' she says, 'and I will never love anybody else. In fact,' 'Lasses says, 'I just prove my love for you by almost wrecking my nerves in rooting Mahogany home. I am still weak,' she says, 'but I have strength enough left to go with you to the Sunset Inn for a nice dinner, and you can give me my money then. Furthermore,' 'Lasses says, 'now that we have a few bobs, I think you better find another place for Mahogany to stay, as it does not look nice for my husband to be living with a horse.'

Well, I am going by the jockey house on my way home, thinking how nice it is that Hymie Banjo Eyes will no longer have to live with Mahogany, and what a fine thing it is to have a loyal, ever-loving wife such as 'Lasses, who risks her nerves rooting for her husband's horse, when I run into this dizzy Scroon in his street clothes, and wishing to be friendly, I say to him like this:

'Hello, Frankie,' I say. 'You put up a nice ride to-day.' 'Where do you get this "Frankie"?' Scroon says. 'My name is Gus.'

'Why,' I say, commencing to think of this and that, 'so it is, but is there a jock called Frankie in the sixth race with you this afternoon?'

'Sure,' Scroon says. 'Frankie Madeley. He rides Side Burns, the favourite; and I make a sucker of him in the stretch run.'

But of course I never mention to Hymie Banjo Eyes that I figure his ever-loving wife roots herself into a dead faint for the horse that will give her to Brick McCloskey, because for all I know she may think Scroon's name is Frankie, at that.

Neat Strip

Now this Rose Viola is twenty years old and is five feet five inches tall in her high-heeled shoes, and weighs one hundred and twenty pounds, net, and has a twenty-six waist, and a thirty-six bust, and wears a four and one-half shoe.

Moreover, she has a seven-inch ankle, and an eleven-inch calf, and the reason I know all these intimate details is because a friend of mine by the name of Rube Goldstein has Rose Viola in a burlesque show and advertises her as the American Venus, and he always prints these specifications in his ads.

But of course Rube Goldstein has no way of putting down in figures how beautiful Rose Viola is, because after all any pancake may have the same specifications and still be a rutabaga. All Rube can do is to show photographs of Rose Viola and after you see these photographs and then see Rose Viola herself you have half a mind to look the photographer

up and ask him what he means by so grossly underestimating the situation.

She has big blue eyes, and hair the colour of sunup, and furthermore this colour is as natural as a six and five. Her skin is as white and as smooth as ivory and her teeth are like rows of new corn on the cob and she has a smile that starts slow and easy on her lips and in her eyes and seems to sort of flow over the rest of her face until any male characters observing same are wishing there is a murder handy that they can commit for her.

Well, I suppose by this time you are saying to yourself what is such a darberoo doing in a burlesque turkey, for burlesque is by no means an intellectual form of entertainment, and the answer to this question is that Rube Goldstein pays Rose Viola four hundred dollars per week, and this is by no means tin.

And the reason Rube Goldstein pays her such a sum is not because Rube is any philanthropist but because Rose Viola draws like a flaxseed poultice, for besides her looks she has that certain something that goes out across the footlights and hits every male character present smack-dab in the kisser and makes him hate to go home and gaze upon his ever-loving wife. In fact, I hear that for three weeks after Rose Viola plays a town the percentage of missing husbands appals the authorities.

It seems that the first time Rube Goldstein sees Rose Viola is in the city of Baltimore, Md., where his show is playing

the old Gaiety, and one of Rube's chorus Judys, a sod widow who is with him nearly thirteen years and raises up three sons to manhood under him, runs off and marries a joskin from over on the eastern shore.

Naturally, Rube considers this a dirty trick, as he is so accustomed to seeing this Judy in his chorus that he feels his show will never look the same to him again; but the same night the widow is missing, Rose Viola appears before him asking for a situation.

Rube tells me he is greatly surprised at such a looking Judy seeking a place in a burlesque show and he explains to Rose Viola that it is a very tough life, to be sure, and that the pay is small, and that she will probably do better for herself if she gets a job dealing them off her arm in a beanery, or some such, but she requests Rube to kindly omit the alfalfa and give her a job, and Rube can see at once by the way she talks that she has personality.

So he hires her at twenty-five slugs per week to start with and raises her to half a C and makes her a principal the second night when he finds eighteen blokes lined up at the stage door after the show looking to date her up. In three weeks she is his star and he is three-sheeting her as if she is Katherine Cornell.

She comes out on the stage all dressed up in a beautiful evening gown and sings a little song, and as soon as she begins singing you wonder, unless you see her before, what

she really is, as you can see by her voice that she is scarcely a singer by trade.

Her voice is not at all the same as Lily Pons's and in fact it is more like an old-fashioned coffee grinder, and about the time you commence to figure that she must be something like a magician and will soon start pulling rabbits out of a hat, Rose Viola begins to dance.

It is not a regular dance, to be sure. It is more of a hop and a skip and a jump back and forth across the stage, and as she is hopping and skipping and jumping, Rose Viola is also feeling around for zippers here and there about her person, and finally the evening gown disappears and she seems to be slightly dishabille but in a genteel manner, and then you can see by her shape that she is indeed a great artist.

Sometimes she will come down off the stage and work along the centre aisle, and this is when the audience really enjoys her most, as she will always stop before some bald-headed old character in an aisle seat where bald-headed characters are generally found, and will pretend to make a great fuss over him, singing to him, and maybe kissing him on top of the bald head and leaving the print of her lips in rouge there, which sometimes puts bald-headed characters to a lot of bother explaining when they get home.

She has a way of laughing and talking back to an audience and keeping it in good humour while she is working, although outside the theatre Rose Viola is very serious, and seldom has much to say. In fact, Rose Viola has so little to

say that there are rumours in some quarters that she is a trifle dumb, but personally I would not mind being dumb myself at four hundred boffoes per week.

Well, it seems that a character by the name of Newsbaum, who runs a spot called the Pigeon Club, hears of Rose Viola, and he goes to see her one night at the old Mid Theatre on Broadway where Rube's show is playing a New York engagement, and this Newsbaum is such a character as is always looking for novelties for his club and he decides that Rose Viola will go good there.

So he offers her a chance to double at his club, working there after she gets through with her regular show, and Rube Goldstein advises her to take it, as Rube is very fond of Rose and he says this may be a first step upward in her career because the Pigeon Club is patronized only by very high-class rumpots.

So Rose Viola opens one night at the Pigeon Club, and she is working on the dance floor close to the tables, and doing the same act she does in burlesque, when a large young character who is sitting at one of the front tables with a bunch of other young characters, including several nice-looking Judys, reaches out and touches Rose Viola with the end of a cigarette in a spot she just unzippers.

Now of course this is all in a spirit of fun, but it is something that never happens in a burlesque house, and naturally Rose is startled no little, and quite some, and in addition to this she is greatly pained, as it seems that it is the

lighted end of the cigarette that the large young character touches her with.

So she begins letting out screams, and these screams attract the attention of Rube Goldstein, who is present to see how she gets along at her opening, and although Rube is nearly seventy years old, and is fat and slow and sleepy-looking, he steps forward and flattens the large young character with a dish of chicken à la king, which he picks up off a near-by table.

Well, it seems that the large young character is nobody but a character by the name of Mr. Choicer, who has great sums of money, and a fine social position, and this incident creates some little confusion, especially as old Rube Goldstein also flattens Newsbaum with another plate, this one containing lobster Newberg, when Newsbaum comes along complaining about Rube ruining his chinaware and also one of his best-paying customers.

Then Rube puts his arm around Rose Viola and makes her get dressed and leads her out of the Pigeon Club and up to Mindy's Restaurant on Broadway, where I am personally present to observe much of what follows.

They sit down at my table and order up a couple of oyster stews, and Rose Viola is still crying at intervals, especially when she happens to rub the spot where the lighted cigarette hits, and Rube Goldstein is saying that for two cents he will go back to the Pigeon Club and flatten somebody again,

when all of a sudden the door opens and in comes a young character in dinner clothes.

He is without a hat, and he is looking rumpled up no little, and on observing him, Rose Viola lets out a small cry, and Rube Goldstein picks up his bowl of oyster stew and starts getting to his feet, for it seems that they both recognize the young character as one of the characters at Mr. Choicer's table in the Pigeon Club.

This young character rushes up in great excitement, and grabs Rube's arm before Rube can let fly with the oyster stew, and he holds Rube down in his chair, and looks at Rose Viola and speaks to her as follows:

'Oh,' he says, 'I search everywhere for you after you leave the Pigeon Club. I wish to beg your pardon for what happens there. I am ashamed of my friend Mr. Choicer. I will never speak to him again as long as I live. He is a scoundrel. Furthermore, he is in bad shape from the chicken à la king. Oh,' the young character says, 'please forgive me for ever knowing him.'

Well, all the time he is talking, he is holding Rube Goldstein down and looking at Rose Viola, and she is looking back at him, and in five minutes more they do not know Rube Goldstein and me are in the restaurant, and in fact they are off by themselves at another table so the young character can make his apologies clearer, and Rube Goldstein is saying to me that after nearly seventy years he comes to the conclusion that the Judys never change.

So, then, this is the beginning of a wonderful romance, and in fact it is love at first sight on both sides, and very pleasant to behold, at that.

It seems that the name of the young character is Daniel Frame, and that he is twenty-six years of age, and in his last year in law school at Yale, and that he comes to New York for a week-end visit and runs into his old college chum, Mr. Choicer, and now here he is in love.

I learn these details afterward from Rose Viola, and I also learn that this Daniel Frame is an only child, and lives with his widowed mother in a two-story white colonial house with ivy on the walls, and a yard around it, just outside the city of Manchester, N.H.

I learn that his mother has an old poodle dog by the name of Rags, and three servants, and that she lives very quietly, and never goes anywhere much except maybe to church and that the moonlight is something wonderful up around Manchester, N.H.

Furthermore, I learn that Daniel Frame comes of the best people in New England, and that he likes skiing, and Benny Goodman's band, and hates mufflers around his neck, and is very fond of popovers for breakfast, and that his eyes are dark brown, and that he is six feet even and weighs one hundred and eighty pounds and that he never goes to a dentist in his life.

I also learn that the ring he wears on the little finger of his left hand is his family crest, and that he sings baritone with a glee club, and the chances are I will learn plenty more about Daniel Frame if I care to listen any further to Rose Viola.

'He wishes to marry me,' Rose says. 'He wishes to take me to the white colonial house outside of Manchester, N.H., where we can raise Sealyham terriers, and maybe children. I love Sealyham terriers,' she says. 'They are awfully cute. Daniel wishes me to quit burlesque entirely. He sees me work at the Mid the other night and he thinks I am wonderful, but,' Rose says, 'he says it worries him constantly to think of me out there on that stage running the risk of catching colds.

'Another thing,' Rose Viola says, 'Daniel wishes me to meet his mother, but he is afraid she will be greatly horrified if she finds out the way I am exposed to the danger of catching colds. He says,' Rose says, 'that his mother is very strict about such things.'

Personally, I consider Daniel Frame a very wishy-washy sort of character, and by no means suitable to a strong personality such as Rose Viola, but when I ask Rube Goldstein what he thinks about it, Rube says to me like this:

'Well,' he says, 'I think it will be a fine thing for her to marry this young character, although,' Rube says, 'from what he tells her of his mother, I do not see how they are going to get past her. I know these old New England broads,' he says. 'They consider burlesque anything but a worthy amusement.

Still,' he says, 'I have no kick coming about the male characters of New England. They are always excellent customers of mine.'

'Why,' I say, 'Rose Viola is a fine artist, and does not need such a thing as marriage.'

'Yes,' Rube says, 'she is the finest artist in her line I ever see but one. Laura Legayo is still tops with me. She retires on me away back yonder before you ever see one of my shows. But,' he says, 'if Rose marries this young character, she will have a home, and a future. Rose needs a future.'

'This burlesque business is about done around here for a while,' Rube says. 'I can see the signs. The blats are beefing, and the cops are complaining about this and that, and one thing and another. They have no soul for art, and besides we are the easiest marks around when the reformers start rousing the cops for anything whatever.

'It is always this way with burlesque,' Rube says. 'It is up and down. It is on the way down now, and Rose may not still be young enough by the time it goes up again. Yes,' he says, 'Rose needs a future.'

Well, it seems that old Rube is a pretty good guesser, because a couple of nights later he gets an order from the police commissioner that there must be no more of this and that, and one thing and another, in his show, and what is more the police commissioner puts cops in all the burlesque houses to see that his order is obeyed.

At first Rube Goldstein figures that he may as well close down his New York run at once, and move to some city that is more hospitable to art, but he is wedged in at the Mid on a contract to pay rent for a few weeks longer, so while he is trying to think what is the best thing to do, he lets the show go on just the same, but omitting this and that, and one thing and another, so as not to offend the police commissioner in case he comes around looking for offence, or the cop the commissioner places on duty in the Mid, who is a character by the name of Halligan.

So there is Rose Viola out on the stage of the Mid doing her number in full costume without ever reaching for as much as a single zipper, and I can see what Rube Goldstein means when he says Rose needs a future, because looking at Rose in full costume really becomes quite monotonous after a while.

To tell the truth, the only one who seems to appreciate Rose in full costume is Daniel Frame when he comes down from Yale one week-end and finds her in this condition. In fact, Daniel Frame is really quite delighted with her.

'It is wonderful,' he says. 'It is especially wonderful because I tell my mother all about you, and she is talking of coming down from Manchester, N.H., to see you perform, and I have been worrying myself sick over her beholding you out there in danger of catching colds. I know she will be greatly pleased with you now, because,' he says, 'you look so sweet and modest and so well dressed.'

Naturally, as long as he is pleased, Rose Viola is pleased too, except that she suffers somewhat from the heat, for there is no doubt but what Rose is greatly in love with him and she scarcely ever talks about anything else, and does not seem to care if her art suffers from the change.

Now it comes on another Saturday night and I am backstage at the Mid talking to Rube Goldstein and he is telling me that he is greatly surprised to find business holding up so good. The house is packed to the doors, and I tell Rube that maybe he is wrong all these years and that the public appreciates art even when it has clothes on, but Rube says he thinks not. He says he thinks it is more likely that the customers are just naturally optimists.

Rose Viola is on the stage in full costume singing her song when all of a sudden somebody in the back of the audience lets out a yell of fire and this is an alarming cry in any theatre, to be sure, and especially in a spot like the Mid as it is an old house, and about as well fixed to stand off a fire as a barrel of grease. Then a duty fireman by the name of Rossoffsky, who is always on duty in the Mid when a show is on, comes rushing backstage and says it is a fire all right.

It seems that a cafeteria next door to the Mid is blazing inside and the flames are eating their way through the theatre wall at the front of the house by the main entrance, and in fact when the alarm is raised the whole wall is blazing on both sides, and it is a most disturbing situation, to be sure.

Well, the audience in the Mid is composed mostly of male characters, because male characters always appreciate burlesque much more than females or children, and these male characters now rise from their seats and start looking for the exits nearest to them, but by now they are shut off from the main entrance by the fire.

So they commence looking for other exits, and there are several of these, but it seems from what Rossoffsky says afterward that these exits are not used for so long that nobody figures it will ever be necessary to use them again, and the doors do not come open so easy, especially with so many trying to open them at once.

Then the male characters begin fighting with each other for the privilege of opening the doors, and also of getting out through the doors after they are opened, and this results in some confusion. In fact, it is not long before the male characters are fighting all over the premises, and knocking each other down, and stepping on each other's faces in a most discourteous manner.

While it is well known to one and all that a burlesque theatre is no place to take an ever-loving wife to begin with, it seems that some of these male characters have their wives with them, and these wives start screaming, but of course they are among the first knocked down and stepped on, so not much is heard of them until afterward.

A few of the male characters are smart enough to leap up on the stage and high-tail it out of there by the back way, but

most of them are so busy fighting on the floor of the theatre that they do not think of this means of exit, and it is just as well that they do not think of it all at once, at that, as there is but one narrow stage door, and a rush will soon pile them up like jack-rabbits there.

The orchestra quits playing and the musicians are dropping their instruments and getting ready to duck under the stage and Rose Viola is standing still in the centre of the stage with her mouth open, looking this way and that in some astonishment and alarm, when all of a sudden a tall, stern-looking old Judy with white hair, and dressed in grey, stands up on a seat in the front row right back of the orchestra leader, and says to Rose Viola like this:

'Quick,' she says. 'Go into your routine.'

Well, Rose Viola still stands there as if she cannot figure out what the old Judy is talking about, and the old Judy makes motions at her with her hands, and then slowly unbuttons a little grey jacket she is wearing, and tosses it aside, and Rose gets the idea.

Now the stern-looking old Judy looks over to the orchestra leader, who is a character by the name of Butwell, and who is with Rube Goldstein's burlesque show since about the year one, and says to him:

'Hit 'er, Buttsy.'

Well, old Buttsy takes a look at her, and then he takes another look, and then he raises his hand, and his musicians settle back in their chairs, and as Buttsy lets his hand fall, they start playing Rose Viola's music, and the tall, stern-looking old Judy stands there on the seat in the front row pointing at the stage and hollering so loud her voice is heard above all the confusion of the male characters at their fighting.

'Look, boys,' she hollers.

And there on the stage is Rose Viola doing her hop, skip and a jump back and forth and feeling for the zippers here and there about her person, and finding same.

Now, on hearing the old Judy's voice, and on observing the scene on the stage, the customers gradually stop fighting with each other and begin easing themselves back into the seats, and paying strict attention to Rose Viola's performance, and all this time the wall behind them is blazing, and it is hotter than one hundred and six in the shade, and smoke is pouring into the Mid, and anybody will tell you that Rose Viola's feat of holding an audience against a house fire is really quite unsurpassed in theatrical history.

The tall, stern-looking old Judy remains standing on the seat in the front row until there are cries behind her to sit down, because it seems she is obstructing the view of some of those back of her, so finally she takes her seat, and Rose Viola keeps right on working.

By this time the fire department arrives and has the situation in the cafeteria under control, and the fire in the wall extinguished, and a fire captain and a squad of men come into the Mid, because it seems that rumours are abroad that a great catastrophe takes place in the theatre. In fact, the captain and his men are greatly alarmed because they cannot see a thing inside the Mid when they first enter on account of the smoke, and the captain sings out as follows:

'Is everybody dead in here?'

Then he sees through the smoke what is going on there on the stage, and he stops and begins enjoying the scene himself, and his men join him, and a good time is being had by one and all until all of a sudden Rose Viola keels over in a faint from her exertions. Rube orders the curtain down but the audience, including the firemen, remain for some time afterward in the theatre, hoping they may get an encore.

While I am standing near the stage door in readiness to take it on the Jesse Owens out of there in case the fire gets close, who comes running up all out of breath but Daniel Frame.

'I just get off the train from New Haven,' he says. 'I run all the way from the station on hearing a report that the Mid is on fire. Is anybody hurt?' he says. 'Is Rose safe?'

Well, I suggest that the best way to find out about this is to go inside and see, so we enter together, and there among the scenery we find Rube Goldstein and a bunch of actors still in

their make-ups gathered about Rose Viola, who is just getting to her feet and looking somewhat nonplussed.

At this same moment, Halligan, the cop stationed in the Mid, comes backstage, and pushes his way through the bunch around Rose Viola and taps her on the shoulder and says to her:

'You are under arrest,' Halligan says. 'I guess I will have to take you, too, Mr. Goldstein,' he says.

'My goodness,' Daniel Frame says. 'What is Miss Viola under arrest for?'

'For putting on that number out there just now,' Halligan says. 'It's a violation of the police commissioner's order.'

'Heavens and earth,' Daniel Frame says. 'Rose, do not tell me you are out there to-night running the risk of catching cold, as before?'

'Yes,' Rose says.

'Oh, my goodness,' Daniel Frame says, 'and all the time my mother is sitting out there in the audience. I figure this week is a great time for her to see you perform, Rose,' he says. 'I cannot get down from New Haven in time to go with her, but I send her alone to see you, and I am to meet her after the theatre with you and introduce you to her. What will she think?'

'Well,' Halligan says, 'I have plenty of evidence against this party. In fact, I see her myself. Not bad,' he says. 'Not bad.'

Rose Viola is standing there looking at Daniel Frame in a sad way, and Daniel Frame is looking at Rose Viola in even a sadder way, when Rossoffsky, the fireman, shoves his way into the gathering, and says to Halligan:

'Copper,' he says, 'I overhear your remarks. Kindly take a walk,' he says. 'If it is not for this party putting on that number out there, the chances are there will be a hundred dead in the aisles from the panic. In fact,' he says, 'I remember seeing you yourself knock over six guys trying to reach an exit before she starts dancing. She is a heroine,' he says. 'That is what she is, and I will testify to it in court.'

At this point who steps in through the stage door but the tall, stern-looking old Judy in grey, and when he sees her, Daniel Frame runs up to her and says:

'Oh, Mother,' he says, 'I am so mortified. Still,' he says, 'I love her just the same.'

But the old Judy scarcely notices him because by this time Rube Goldstein is shaking both of her hands and then over Rube's shoulder she sees Rose Viola, and she says to Rose like this:

'Well, miss,' she says, 'that is a right neat strip you do out there just now, although,' she says, 'you are mighty slow getting into it. You need polishing in spots, and then you will

be okay. Rube,' she says, 'speaking of neat strips, who is the best you ever see?'

'Well,' Rube Goldstein says, 'if you are talking of the matter as art, I will say that thirty years ago, if they happen to be holding any competitions anywhere, I will be betting on you against the world, Laura.'

Bred for Battle

One night a guy by the name of Bill Corum, who is one of these sport scribes, gives me a Chinee for a fight at Madison Square Garden, a Chinee being a ducket with holes punched in it like old-fashioned Chink money, to show that it is a free ducket, and the reason I am explaining to you how I get this ducket is because I do not wish anybody to think I am ever simple enough to pay out my own potatoes for a ducket to a fight, even if I have any potatoes.

Personally, I will not give you a bad two-bit piece to see a fight anywhere, because the way I look at it, half the time the guys who are supposed to do the fighting go in there and put on the old do-se-do, and I consider this a great fraud upon the public, and I do not believe in encouraging dishonesty.

But of course I never refuse a Chinee to such events, because the way I figure it, what can I lose except my time, and my time is not worth more than a bob a week the way things are. So on the night in question I am standing in the lobby of the Garden with many other citizens, and I am trying to find out if there is any skullduggery doing in connection with the fight, because any time there is any skullduggery doing I love to know it, as it is something worth knowing in case a guy wishes to get a small wager down.

Well, while I am standing there, somebody comes up behind me and hits me an awful belt on the back, knocking my wind plumb out of me, and making me very indignant indeed. As soon as I get a little of my wind back again, I turn around figuring to put a large blast on the guy who slaps me, but who is it but a guy by the name of Spider McCoy, who is known far and wide as a manager of fighters.

Well, of course I do not put the blast on Spider McCoy, because he is an old friend of mine, and furthermore, Spider McCoy is such a guy as is apt to let a left hook go at anybody who puts the blast on him, and I do not believe in getting in trouble, especially with good left-hookers.

So I say hello to Spider, and am willing to let it go at that, but Spider seems glad to see me, and says to me like this:

'Well, well, well, well, well!' Spider says.

'Well,' I say to Spider McCoy, 'how many wells does it take to make a river?'

'One, if it is big enough,' Spider says, so I can see he knows the answer all right. 'Listen,' he says, 'I just think up the greatest proposition I ever think of in my whole life, and who knows but what I can interest you in same.'

'Well, Spider,' I say, 'I do not care to hear any propositions at this time, because it may be a long story, and I wish to step inside and see the impending battle. Anyway,' I say, 'if it is a proposition involving financial support, I wish to state that I do not have any resources whatever at this time.'

'Never mind the battle inside,' Spider says. 'It is nothing but a tank job, anyway. And as for financial support,' Spider says, 'this does not require more than a pound note, tops, and I know you have a pound note because I know you put the bite on Overcoat Obie for this amount not an hour ago. Listen,' Spider McCoy says, 'I know where I can place my hands on the greatest heavy-weight prospect in the world to-day, and all I need is the price of car-fare to where he is.'

Well, off and on, I know Spider McCoy twenty years, and in all this time I never know him when he is not looking for the greatest heavy-weight prospect in the world. And as long as Spider knows I have the pound note, I know there is no use trying to play the duck for him, so I stand there wondering who the stool pigeon can be who informs him of my financial status.

'Listen,' Spider says, 'I just discover that I am all out of line in the way I am looking for heavy-weight prospects in the past. I am always looking for nothing but plenty of size,' he says. 'Where I make my mistake is not looking for blood lines. Professor D just smartens me up,' Spider says.

Well, when he mentions the name of Professor D, I commence taking a little interest, because it is well known to one and all that Professor D is one of the smartest old guys in the world. He is once a professor in a college out in Ohio, but quits this dodge to handicap the horses, and he is a first-rate handicapper, at that. But besides knowing how to handicap the horses, Professor D knows many other things, and is highly respected in all walks of life, especially on Broadway.

'Now then,' Spider says, 'Professor D calls my attention this afternoon to the fact that when a guy is looking for a race horse, he does not take just any horse that comes along, but he finds out if the horse's papa is able to run in his day, and if the horse's mamma can get out of her own way when she is young. Professor D shows me how a guy looks for speed in a horse's breeding away back to its great-great-great-great-grandpa and grand-mamma' Spider McCoy says.

'Well,' I say, 'anybody knows this without asking Professor D. In fact,' I say, 'you even look up a horse's parents to see if they can mud before betting on a plug to win in heavy going.'

'All right,' Spider says, 'I know all this myself, but I never think much about it before Professor D mentions it. Professor D says if a guy is looking for a hunting dog he does not pick

a Pekingese pooch, but he gets a dog that is bred to hunt from away back yonder, and if he is after a game chicken he does not take a Plymouth Rock out of the back-yard.

'So then,' Spider says, 'Professor D wishes to know if when I am looking for a fighter, if I do not look for one who comes of fighting stock. Professor D wishes to know,' Spider says, 'why I do not look for some guy who is bred to fight, and when I think this over, I can see the professor is right.

'And then all of a sudden,' Spider says, 'I get the largest idea I ever have in all my life. Do you remember a guy I have about twenty years back by the name of Shamus Mulrooney, the Fighting Harp?' Spider says. 'A big, rough, tough heavy-weight out of Newark?'

'Yes,' I say, 'I remember Shamus very well indeed. The last time I see him is the night Pounder Pat O'Shea almost murders him in the old Garden,' I say. 'I never see a guy with more ticker than Shamus, unless maybe it is Pat.'

'Yes,' Spider says, 'Shamus has plenty of ticker. He is about through the night of the fight you speak of, otherwise Pat will never lay a glove on him. It is not long after this fight that Shamus packs in and goes back to brick-laying in Newark, and it is also about this same time,' Spider says, 'that he marries Pat O'Shea's sister, Bridget.

'Well, now,' Spider says, 'I remember they have a boy who must be around nineteen years old now, and if ever a guy is bred to fight it is a boy by Shamus Mulrooney out of Bridget

O'Shea, because,' Spider says, 'Bridget herself can lick half the heavy-weights I see around nowadays if she is half as good as she is the last time I see her. So now you have my wonderful idea. We will go to Newark and get this boy and make him heavy-weight champion of the world.'

'What you state is very interesting indeed, Spider,' I say. 'But,' I say, 'how do you know this boy is a heavy-weight?'

'Why,' Spider says, 'how can he be anything else but a heavy-weight, what with his papa as big as a house, and his mamma weighing maybe a hundred and seventy pounds in her step-ins? Although of course,' Spider says, 'I never see Bridget weigh in in such manner.

'But,' Spider says, 'even if she does carry more weight than I will personally care to spot a doll, Bridget is by no means a pelican when she marries Shamus. In fact,' he says, 'she is pretty good-looking. I remember their wedding well, because it comes out that Bridget is in love with some other guy at the time, and this guy comes to see the nuptials, and Shamus runs him all the way from Newark to Elizabeth, figuring to break a couple of legs for the guy if he catches him. But,' Spider says, 'the guy is too speedy for Shamus, who never has much foot anyway.'

Well, all that Spider says appeals to me as a very sound business proposition, so the upshot of it is I give him my pound note to finance his trip to Newark.

Then I do not see Spider McCoy again for a week, but one day he calls me up and tells me to hurry over to the Pioneer gymnasium to see the next heavy-weight champion of the world, Thunderbolt Mulrooney.

I am personally somewhat disappointed when I see Thunderbolt Mulrooney, and especially when I find out his first name is Raymond and not Thunderbolt at all, because I am expecting to see a big, fierce guy with red hair and a chest like a barrel, such as Shamus Mulrooney has when he is in his prime. But who do I see but a tall, pale-looking young guy with blond hair and thin legs.

Furthermore, he has pale blue eyes, and a far-away look in them, and he speaks in a low voice, which is nothing like the voice of Shamus Mulrooney. But Spider seems satisfied with Thunderbolt, and when I tell him Thunderbolt does not look to me like the next heavy-weight champion of the world, Spider says like this:

'Why,' he says, 'the guy is nothing but a baby, and you must give him time to fill out. He may grow to be bigger than his papa. But you know,' Spider says, getting indignant as he thinks about it, 'Bridget Mulrooney does not wish to let this guy be the next heavy-weight champion of the world. In fact,' Spider says, 'she kicks up an awful row when I go to get him, and Shamus finally has to speak to her severely. Shamus says he does not know if I can ever make a fighter of this guy because Bridget coddles him until he is nothing but a mush-head, and Shamus says he is sick and tired of seeing

the guy sitting around the house doing nothing but reading and playing the zither.'

'Does he play the zither yet?' I ask Spider McCoy.

'No,' Spider says, 'I do not allow my fighters to play zithers. I figure it softens them up. This guy does not play anything at present. He seems to be in a daze most of the time, but of course everything is new to him. He is bound to come out okay, because,' Spider says, 'he is certainly bred right. I find out from Shamus that all the Mulrooneys are great fighters back in the old country,' Spider says, 'and furthermore he tells me Bridget's mother once licks four Newark cops who try to stop her from pasting her old man, so,' Spider says, 'this lad is just naturally steaming with fighting blood.'

Well, I drop around to the Pioneer once or twice a week after this, and Spider McCoy is certainly working hard with Thunderbolt Mulrooney. Furthermore, the guy seems to be improving right along, and gets so he can box fairly well and punch the bag, and all this and that, but he always has that far-away look in his eyes, and personally I do not care for fighters with far-away looks.

Finally one day Spider calls me up and tells me he has Thunderbolt Mulrooney matched in a four-round preliminary bout at the St. Nick with a guy by the name of Bubbles Browning, who is fighting almost as far back as the first battle of Bull Run, so I can see Spider is being very careful

in matching Thunderbolt. In fact I congratulate Spider on his carefulness.

'Well,' Spider says, 'I am taking this match just to give Thunderbolt the feel of the ring. I am taking Bubbles because he is an old friend of mine, and very deserving, and furthermore,' Spider says, 'he gives me his word he will not hit Thunderbolt very hard and will become unconscious the instant Thunderbolt hits him. You know,' Spider says, 'you must encourage a young heavy-weight, and there is nothing that encourages one so much as knocking somebody unconscious.'

Now of course it is nothing for Bubbles to promise not to hit anybody very hard because even when he is a young guy, Bubbles cannot punch his way out of a paper bag, but I am glad to learn that he also promises to become unconscious very soon, as naturally I am greatly interested in Thunderbolt's career, what with owning a piece of him, and having an investment of one pound in him already.

So the night of the fight, I am at the St. Nick very early, and many other citizens are there ahead of me, because by this time Spider McCoy gets plenty of publicity for Thunderbolt by telling the boxing scribes about his wonderful fighting blood lines, and everybody wishes to see a guy who is bred for battle, like Thunderbolt.

I take a guest with me to the fight by the name of Harry the Horse, who comes from Brooklyn, and as I am anxious to help Spider McCoy all I can, as well as to protect my

investment in Thunderbolt, I request Harry to call on Bubbles Browning in his dressing-room and remind him of his promise about hitting Thunderbolt.

Harry the Horse does this for me, and furthermore he shows Bubbles a large revolver and tells Bubbles that he will be compelled to shoot his ears off if Bubbles forgets his promise, but Bubbles says all this is most unnecessary, as his eyesight is so bad he cannot see to hit anybody, anyway.

Well, I know a party who is a friend of the guy who is going to referee the preliminary bouts, and I am looking for this party to get him to tell the referee to disqualify Bubbles in case it looks as if he is forgetting his promise and is liable to hit Thunderbolt, but before I can locate the party, they are announcing the opening bout, and there is Thunderbolt in the ring looking very far away indeed, with Spider McCoy behind him.

It seems to me I never see a guy who is so pale all over as Thunderbolt Mulrooney, but Spider looks down at me and tips me a large wink, so I can see that everything is as right as rain, especially when Harry the Horse makes motions at Bubbles Browning like a guy firing a large revolver at somebody, and Bubbles smiles, and also winks.

Well, when the bell rings, Spider gives Thunderbolt a shove towards the centre, and Thunderbolt comes out with his hands up, but looking more far away than somewhat, and something tells me that Thunderbolt by no means feels the killer instinct such as I love to see in fighters. In fact,

something tells me that Thunderbolt is not feeling enthusiastic about this proposition in any way, shape, manner, or form.

Old Bubbles almost falls over his own feet coming out of his corner, and he starts bouncing around making passes at Thunderbolt, and waiting for Thunderbolt to hit him so he can become unconscious. Naturally, Bubbles does not wish to become unconscious without getting hit, as this may look suspicious to the public.

Well, instead of hitting Bubbles, what does Thunderbolt Mulrooney do but turn around and walk over to a neutral corner, and lean over the ropes with his face in his gloves, and bust out crying. Naturally, this is a most surprising incident to one and all, and especially to Bubbles Browning.

The referee walks over to Thunderbolt Mulrooney and tries to turn him around, but Thunderbolt keeps his face in his gloves and sobs so loud that the referee is deeply touched and starts sobbing with him. Between the sobs he asks Thunderbolt if he wishes to continue the fight, and Thunderbolt shakes his head, although as a matter of fact no fight whatever starts so far, so the referee declares Bubbles Browning the winner, which is a terrible surprise to Bubbles.

Then the referee puts his arm around Thunderbolt and leads him over to Spider McCoy, who is standing in his corner with a very strange expression on his face. Personally, I consider the entire spectacle so revolting that I go out into the air, and stand around a while expecting to hear any

minute that Spider McCoy is in the hands of the gendarmes on a charge of mayhem.

But it seems that nothing happens, and when Spider finally comes out of the St. Nick, he is only looking sorrowful because he just hears that the promoter declines to pay him the fifty bobs he is supposed to receive for Thunderbolt's services, the promoter claiming that Thunderbolt renders no service.

'Well,' Spider says, 'I fear this is not the next heavy-weight champion of the world after all. There is nothing in Professor D's idea about blood lines as far as fighters are concerned, although,' he says, 'it may work out all right with horses and dogs, and one thing and another. I am greatly disappointed,' Spider says, 'but then I am always being disappointed in heavy-weights. There is nothing we can do but take this guy back home, because,' Spider says, 'the last thing I promise Bridget Mulrooney is that I will personally return him to her in case I am not able to make him heavy-weight champion, as she is afraid he will get lost if he tries to find his way home alone.'

So the next day, Spider McCoy and I take Thunderbolt Mulrooney over to Newark and to his home, which turns out to be a nice little house in a side street with a yard all round and about, and Spider and I are just as well pleased that old Shamus Mulrooney is absent when we arrive, because Spider says that Shamus is just such a guy as will be asking a lot of questions about the fifty bobbos that Thunderbolt does not get.

Well, when we reach the front door of the house, out comes a big, fine-looking doll with red cheeks, all excited, and she takes Thunderbolt in her arms and kisses him, so I know this is Bridget Mulrooney, and I can see she knows what happens, and in fact I afterward learn that Thunderbolt telephones her the night before.

After a while she pushes Thunderbolt into the house and stands at the door as if she is guarding it against us entering to get him again, which of course is very unnecessary. And all this time Thunderbolt is sobbing no little, although by and by the sobs die away, and from somewhere in the house comes the sound of music I seem to recognize as the music of a zither.

Well, Bridget Mulrooney never says a word to us as she stands in the door, and Spider McCoy keeps staring at her in a way that I consider very rude indeed. I am wondering if he is waiting for a receipt for Thunderbolt, but finally he speaks as follows:

'Bridget,' Spider says, 'I hope and trust that you will not consider me too fresh, but I wish to learn the name of the guy you are going around with just before you marry Shamus. I remember him well,' Spider says, 'but I cannot think of his name, and it bothers me not being able to think of names. He is a tall, skinny, stoop-shouldered guy,' Spider says, 'with a hollow chest and a soft voice, and he loves music.'

Well, Bridget Mulrooney stands there in the doorway, staring back at Spider, and it seems to me that the red

suddenly fades out of her cheeks, and just then we hear a lot of yelling, and around the corner of the house comes a bunch of five or six kids, who seem to be running from another kid.

This kid is not very big, and is maybe fifteen or sixteen years old, and he has red hair and many freckles, and he seems very mad at the other kids. In fact, when he catches up with them he starts belting away at them with his fists and before anybody can as much as say boo, he has three of them on the ground as flat as pancakes, while the others are yelling bloody murder.

Personally, I never see such wonderful punching by a kid, especially with his left hand, and Spider McCoy is also much impressed, and is watching the kid with great interest. Then Bridget Mulrooney runs out and grabs the freckle-faced kid with one hand and smacks him with the other hand and hauls him, squirming and kicking, over to Spider McCoy and says to Spider like this:

'Mr. McCoy,' Bridget says, 'this is my youngest son, Terence, and though he is not a heavy-weight, and will never be a heavy-weight, perhaps he will answer your purpose. Suppose you see his father about him sometime,' she says, 'and hoping you will learn to mind your own business, I wish you a very good day.'

Then she takes the kid into the house under her arm and slams the door in our kissers, and there is nothing for us to do but walk away. And as we are walking away, all of a

sudden Spider McCoy snaps his fingers as guys will do when they get an unexpected thought, and says like this:

'I remember the guy's name,' he says. 'It is Cedric Tilbury, and he is a floor-walker in Hamburgher's department store, and,' Spider says, 'how he can play the zither!'

I see in the papers the other day where Jimmy Johnston, the match-maker at the Garden, matches Tearing Terry Mulrooney, the new sensation of the light-weight division, to fight for the championship, but it seems from what Spider McCoy tells me that my investment with him does not cover any fighters in his stable except maybe heavy-weights.

And it also seems that Spider McCoy is not monkeying with heavy-weights since he gets Tearing Terry.

Too Much Pep

It is really surprising how many wicked people there are in this world, and especially along East 114th Street up in Harlem.

Of course I do not say that all the wicked people in the world are along East 114th Street, because some of them are on East 115th Street, and maybe on East 116th Street, too,

but the wicked people on East 114th Street are wickeder than somewhat, especially Ignazio Vardarelli and his mob.

This Ignazio Vardarelli is called Ignaz the Wolf, and he is an Italian party from Calabria, with a noggin shaped like the little end of an ice-cream cone, and a lot of scars on his face which make him look very fierce. All his mob are also Italians, and most of them have noggins shaped like Ignaz', and some of them have even more scars on their kissers, and therefore look even fiercer than he does, which is very, very fierce, indeed.

Now Ignaz the Wolf is a guy who never works, and neither does anybody else in his mob, and what they do for a living is very simple, and I do not mind saying I am sorry I never have the nerve to invent something as easy, because after all work is a great bother.

In Harlem there are a great many Italians, and among them are quite a lot of Moustache Petes, who are old-time Italians with large black moustaches, and who have little stores in cellars and such places and sell spaghetti, and macaroni and cheeses, and other articles of which Italian persons are very fond. I like spaghetti myself now and then, and also pasta fagiole, and broccoli, cooked with garlic, which is very good for the old stomach.

In fact, it is because I like such things that I come to hear about Ignazio Vardarelli, because I often go to a spot in Harlem where a guy can get good Italian food, especially devil-fish fixed a certain way, and maybe a little red wine

which the guy who owns the joint makes right in his own cellar by walking up and down in his bare feet in a tub of grapes. In fact, one time when the guy has very painful corns on his feet, and cannot walk up and down in the tub of grapes, I take off my shoes and walk for him, but whoever sells him the grapes leaves a big rock among them, and I get a bad stone bruise from it on my heel.

There are always some very nice Italian people sitting around and about this joint, and I love to listen to them eat spaghetti, and talk, though I do not understand much of what they are saying because Italian is one language I never learn. In fact, I never learn any other language except English, and a very little bit of Yiddish, because a guy who lives in New York can get around most anywhere on these two languages, with a few signs mixed up with them.

Anyway, I have a lot of very good friends among the Italians, and I never speak of them as wops, or guineas, or dagoes, or grease-balls, because I consider this most disrespectful, like calling Jewish people mockies, or Heebs, or geese. The way I look at it, if a guy is respectful to one and all, why, one and all will be respectful to him, and anyway, there are many Italians, and Jewish people too, who are apt to haul off and knock you bowlegged if you call them such names.

Well, these Moustache Petes I am talking about are very industrious, and very saving, and most of them have a few bobs laid away for a rainy day, so when Ignaz the Wolf feels that he needs a little money to take care of his overhead, he

picks out some Moustache Pete that he figures is able to contribute and writes him a nice letter about as follows:

'Dear Joe' (or maybe Tony, for most Italians are called Joe or Tony), 'please call and see me with five hundred dollars. Yours sincerely, Ignazio.'

Then Ignazio waits two or three days, and if Joe or Tony does not show up with the five yards, or whatever it is that Ignazio asks for, Ignazio writes him another letter, which is a sort of follow-up letter, the same as any business concern sends out to a customer, and this follow-up letter is about as follows:

'Dear Joe' (or Tony), I am sorry to hear you have a headache. I figure you must have a headache, because you do not call to see me with the five hundred dollars. I hope and trust you get over this headache very soon, as I am waiting for the five hundred. With kindest regards, I am yours truly, Ignazio.'

He puts a black mark on this letter, and shoves it under Joe or Tony's door, and then he waits a couple of days more. By this time Ignaz the Wolf is naturally getting a little bit impatient, because he is a good business man, and business men like to see their letters receive prompt attention. If he gets no answer from Joe or Tony, there is nothing else for Ignaz the Wolf to do but put a little bomb under the joint where the Moustache Pete lives to remind him of the letter, and very few of Ignaz's customers wait any longer to settle after the first bomb.

So Ignaz the Wolf and his mob do very well for themselves and are able to wear good clothes, and jewellery, and sit around eating spaghetti and drinking dago red and having a nice time generally, and everybody that sees them says hello, very pleasant, even including the Moustache Petes, although of course the chances are they are not on the level with their hellos and secretly hope that Ignaz falls over dead.

Personally, I never hear much of Ignaz the Wolf until I run into a young Italian guy in the Harlem eating-joint by the name of Marco Sciarra, or some such, who is a very legitimate guy up in Harlem, being in the artichoke business with his old man. It seems that the artichoke business is a first-class business in Harlem, though personally I will not give you ten cents for all the artichokes you can pack in the Hudson tubes, as I consider them a very foolish fruit any way you look at them. But Marco and his old man do very good with artichokes, and in fact they do so well that Marco is able to play plenty of horses, which is how I come to get acquainted with him, because it is well known to one and all that I am one of the greatest horse players in New York, and will be a very rich guy if it is not for crooked jockeys riding the horses different from the way I dope them.

Anyway, one night Marco somehow starts beefing about Ignaz the Wolf and his mob, and finally he lets it out that Ignaz is trying to put the arm on him and his old man for five G's, for no reason except that Ignaz seems to need it.

Now Marco is born and raised right here in this man's town, and he is quite an all-round guy in many respects, and

he is certainly not the kind of guy anybody with any sense will figure a chump. He is not the kind of a guy a smart guy will figure to hold still for five G's for no reason, and the chances are Ignaz the Wolf is not thinking of Marco in the first place. The chances are he is thinking more of Marco's old man, who is a Moustache Pete in every way.

Furthermore, if it is left to the old man, he will kick in the five G's to Ignaz without a yip, just to avoid trouble, but Marco can see where he can use any stray five G's himself to pay off a few bookmakers. Anyway, Marco tells me he will see Ignaz in the place where Ignaz is a sure thing to go some day before he will give up five G's, or any part of five G's, and I say I do not blame him, for five G's is plenty of sugar, even if you do not have it.

This is the last I see of Marco for a couple of weeks. Then one day I happen to be in Harlem, so I go over to his place of business on East 114th Street. The Marcos have an office on the ground floor of a two-story building, and live upstairs, and when I get there I notice that the glass in all the windows seems to be out, and that things are generally upset.

Well, when I find Marco he explains to me that somebody puts a fifteen-dollar bomb in the joint the night before, and while Marco does not say right out that Ignaz the Wolf does this, he says he is willing to lay 8 to 5 and take Ignaz against the field, because it seems he sends word to Ignaz that he need not expect the five G's he is looking for.

Then Marco explains to me that the fifteen-dollar bomb is only meant as a sort of convincer, and that according to the rules Ignaz will next put a thirty-two-dollar bomb in the joint, which will be a little more powerful than the fifteen-dollar bomb. In fact, Marco says, the thirty-two-dollar bomb will be powerful enough to lift them out of their beds upstairs a foot to a foot and a half. But finally, if the five G's is not paid to Ignaz the Wolf in the meantime, he will put a fifty-dollar bomb under them, and this bomb will practically ruin everything in the neighbourhood, including the neighbours.

Well, naturally I am very indignant about the whole proposition, but Marco says it is only fair to Ignaz the Wolf to say he writes them a couple of very polite letters before he makes a move, and does nothing whatever underhand before sending the bomb.

'But my old man is now very much displeased with Ignaz,' Marco says. 'He is even more displeased than I am. It takes quite a little to displease my old man, but when he is displeased, he is certainly greatly displeased, indeed. In fact,' Marco says, 'my old man and other Italian citizens of Harlem hold a meeting to-day, and they come to the conclusion that it is for the best interests of the community to have Ignaz put in his place before he cleans everybody out. So they are going to put Ignaz in his place.'

'Well,' I say, 'what is Ignaz's place?'

'Ignaz's place is six feet underground,' Marco says, 'and this is where the citizens are going to put him.'

'Why, Marco,' I say, 'this is most horrifying, indeed, although personally I am in favour of it. But,' I say, 'I do not think Ignaz will care to be put in his place, and as he is well mobbed I do not see how it can be brought about without somebody getting in trouble. I hope and trust, Marco,' I say, 'that neither you or your old man are going to get tangled up in this proposition.'

'No,' Marco says, 'we will not get tangled up. In fact, nobody in Harlem will get tangled up, because they are sending to Sicily for a certain party to put Ignaz in his place. They are sending for Don Pep'.'

Well, I finally make out from what Marco tells me that at this meeting many of the old-fashioned Italians of Harlem are present, with their moustaches sticking right out straight with indignation, and it is the opinion of one and all that Ignaz shall be put in his place as quickly as possible. But Marco says there is quite a difference of opinion as to who shall put Ignaz in his place, and the meeting lasts a long time, and there is plenty of argument.

It seems that all of these old-timers know of some party back in Italy that they figure is just the one to put Ignaz in his place, and they get up and make speeches about their guys as if they are delegates to a convention boosting candidates for a nice nomination.

Marco says an old Moustache Pete by the name of Bianchini, who is a shoemaker, almost carries the meeting in favour of a guy by the name of Corri, who, it seems, makes a

great showing putting parties in their places around Napoli, and who is favourably remembered by many of the citizens present. Marco says old Bianchini is a good speaker and he talks for almost an hour telling about how this guy puts parties in their places by slipping a little short rope around their necks, and guzzling them before they have time to say Jack Robinson, and it is commencing to look as if Corri is the guy, when Marco's old man steps forward and raises his hand to stop all of this cheering for Corri.

'I will not take up much of your time in presenting the name of my choice,' Marco says his old man says. 'It is a name that is well known to many of you older delegates. It is the name of one who has made history at putting parties in their places, the name of a celebrated citizen of Sicily, experienced and skilful in his calling—a name that is above reproach. I give you, fellow citizens, the name of "Don Pep'", of Siracusa.'

Well, at this everybody becomes very enthusiastic, Marco says, and also their blood runs cold, because it seems that Don Pep' is for many years the outstanding man in all Italy at putting parties in their places. All the old-timers know of him by reputation, and some of them even see him when they are young guys back in the old country, while Marco's old man knows him personally.

It seems that Don Pep' has a record like a prize fighter, and Marco's old man reads this record to the meeting, as follows:

Milan, 1899, 2 men
Venice, 1904, 1 man
Naples, 1909, 3 men
Rome, 1913, 1 man
Genoa, 1921, 2 men, 4 horses
Nice, 1928, 1 man

Well, when the thing comes to a vote, Don Pep' gets all the votes but one, old Bianchini sticking to Corri, and the meeting adjourns with everybody satisfied that Ignaz the Wolf is to be put in his place in first-class style.

Now getting Don Pep' over to this country to put Ignaz in his place is going to cost something, so Marco, seeing a chance to turn a few honest bobs, propositions his old man to get Ignaz put in his place for about half of what Don Pep' will cost, Marco figuring that he can find a couple of guys downtown who are willing to work cheap, but his old man refuses to listen to him. His old man says this business must be transacted in a dignified way, and under the old-fashioned rules, though Marco says he does not see what difference it makes if a guy is to be put in his place whether it is under the old-fashioned rules or the new no-foul system, especially as nobody explains the old-fashioned rules, or seems to know what they are.

Personally, if I am planning to get a guy put in his place I will not go around telling people about it. In fact, I will keep it a very great secret for fear the guy may hear of it and take steps, but these Moustache Petes make no bones whatever about sending for Don Pep', and everybody in the

neighbourhood knows it, including Ignaz the Wolf and his mob. I figure that maybe the Moustache Petes want Ignaz to know it, thinking he may decide to haul ashes out of Harlem before anything happens to him, but Ignaz is a pretty bold guy one way and another, and he only laughs about Don Pep'. Ignaz says Don Pep' is old stuff, and may go in Italy years ago, but not in the U.S.A. in these times.

Naturally, I am greatly interested in Don Pep', and I make Marco promise to tell me when he arrives. I love to look at a top-notcher in any line, and I judge from Don Pep's record that he is a champion of the world. So some weeks later when I get a telephone call from Marco that Don Pep' is here, I hurry up to Harlem and meet Marco, and he promises to show me Don Pep' after it gets dark, because it seems Don Pep' moves around only at night.

He is living in the basement of a tenement house in East 114th Street with an old Sicilian by the name of Sutari, who is a real Moustache Pete and who has a shoe-shining joint downtown. He is a nice old man, and a good friend of mine, though afterward I hear he is a tough guy back in his old home town in Sicily.

Well, when I get a peek at Don Pep', I almost bust out laughing, for what is he but a little old man wearing a long black coat that trails the ground, and a funny flat black hat with a low crown and a stiff brim. He looks to me like somebody out of a play, especially as he has long white hair and bushy white whiskers all over his face like a poodle dog.

But when I get close to him, I do not feel so much like laughing, because he raises his head and stares at me through the whiskers and I see a pair of black eyes like a snake's eyes, with a look in them such as gives me the shivers all over. Personally, I never see such a look in anybody's eyes before in my life, and I am very glad indeed to walk briskly away from Don Pep'.

I peek back over my shoulder, and Don Pep' is standing there with his head bowed on his chest, as harmless-looking as a rabbit, and I feel like laughing again at the idea of such an old guy being brought all the way from Sicily to put Ignaz the Wolf in his place. Then I think of those eyes, and start shivering harder than ever, and Marco shivers with me and explains to me what happens when Don Pep' first arrives, and since.

It seems that Marco's old man and a lot of other Moustache Petes meet Don Pep' at the boat that brings him from Sicily, and they are wishing to entertain him, but Don Pep' says he is not here for pleasure, and all they can do for him is to show him the guy he is to put in his place. Well, naturally, nobody wishes to put the finger on Ignaz the Wolf in public, because Ignaz may remember same, and feel hurt about it, so they give Don Pep' a description of Ignaz, and his address, which is a cigar store on East 114th Street, where Ignaz and his mob always hang out.

A few hours later when Ignaz is sitting in the cigar store playing klob with some of his mob, in comes Don Pep', all bundled up in his black coat, though it is a warm night, at

that. He has a way of walking along very slow, and he is always tap-tapping on the sidewalk ahead of him with a big cane, like a blind man, but his feet never make a sound.

Well, naturally Ignaz the Wolf jumps up when such a strange-looking party bobs in on him, for Ignaz can see that this must be Don Pep', the guy who is coming to put him in his place, and knowing where his place is, Ignaz is probably on the look-out for Don Pep', anyway. So Ignaz stands there with his cards in his hand staring at Don Pep', and Don Pep' walks right up to him, and shoots his head up out of his cloak collar like a turtle and looks Ignaz in the eye.

He never says one word to Ignaz, and while Ignaz tries to think of something smart to say to Don Pep', he cannot make his tongue move a lick. He is like a guy who is hypnotized. The other guys at the table sit there looking at Ignaz and Don Pep', and never making a wrong move, though on form any one of them figures to out with the old equalizer and plug Don Pep'. Finally, after maybe three minutes hand running of looking at Ignaz, Don Pep' suddenly makes a noise with his mouth like a snake hissing, and then he turns and walks out of the joint, tap-tapping with his cane ahead of him.

After he is gone, Ignaz comes up for air, and starts explaining why he does not do something about Don Pep', but even Ignaz's own mobsters figure the old guy runs something of a sandy on Ignaz. What puzzles them no little is that Don Pep' makes no move to put Ignaz in his place then and there, as long as he comes all the way from Sicily to do it.

But two nights later, when Ignaz-the Wolf is again playing klob in the cigar store, who pops in but old Don Pep', and once more he stands looking Ignaz in the eye and never saying as much as howdy. This time Ignaz manages to get a few words out but Don Pep' never answers him, and winds up his looking at Ignaz with that same hissing sound, like a snake. After this Ignaz does not keep his old hours around the cigar store, but he starts in getting very tough with the Moustache Petes, and writing them very stiff business notes about sending in their contributions.

Well, it seems that the citizens around and about get very independent after Don Pep' arrives, and commence paying no attention to Ignaz's notes, and even take to giving Ignaz's collectors the old ha-ha, in Italian, which burns Ignaz up quite some. He complains that Don Pep' is hurting his business, and lets it out here and there that after he takes care of Don Pep' he is going to make his old customers very sorry that they ignore him. But somehow Ignaz does not put any more bombs around, except a few fifteen-dollar ones on guys who do not count much.

In the meantime, old Don Pep' goes walking up and down the streets, his whiskers down in his cloak collar, no matter how warm it gets, and the citizens lift their hats to him as he passes by. In fact, I lift my own lid one evening when he passes me, because I feel that a guy with his record is entitled to much respect. But knowing Ignaz the Wolf, I figure it is only a question of time when we will be walking slow behind the old guy, especially as he does not seem to be making any kind of move to put Ignaz in his place, per agreement.

Always late at night Don Pep' stands in front of an areaway between the tenement house where he lives and the house next door, leaning up against a sort of iron grating that walls off the areaway from the street. It happens that no light shines on the areaway, so all you see as you pass by is a sort of outline of Don Pep' against the grating, and now and then a little glow as he puffs at a cigarette through his whiskers. He is certainly a strange-looking old crocodile, and I often wonder what he is thinking about as he stands there.

I can see now how smart the Moustache Petes are in making no secret of what Don Pep' is here for, because the publicity he gets keeps Ignaz the Wolf from doing anything to him. Naturally if anything drastic happens to Don Pep', the coppers will figure Ignaz responsible, and the coppers in this town are waiting for several years to find something drastic that Ignaz is responsible for.

But there is no doubt Ignaz the Wolf is getting sick and tired of Don Pep', especially since business is so bad, so one night the thing that is a sure thing to happen comes off. An automobile tears past the spot where Don Pep' is standing, as usual, in front of the areaway, and out of this automobile comes a big blooey-blooey, with four guys letting go with sawed-off shotguns at once.

As the automobile cuts in close to the kerb, this puts the gunners only the distance across the sidewalk from Don Pep', so there is little chance that four guys using shotguns are going to miss, especially as the shotguns are loaded with buckshot, which scatters nice and wide.

Well, there are very few citizens around the spot at this hour, and they start running away lickity-split as soon as they hear the first blooey, because the citizens of this part of Harlem know that a blooey is never going to do anybody much good. But before they start running, some of the citizens see old Don Pep' fold up in a little black pile in front of the areaway as the automobile tears on down the street, with Ignaz the Wolf sitting back in it laughing very heartily. I will say one thing for Ignaz, that when it comes down to cases, he is always ready to go out on his own jobs himself, although this is mainly because he wishes to see that the jobs are well done.

Ten minutes later, Ignaz is walking into the cigar store so as to be playing klob and looking very innocent when the coppers come around to speak to him about the matter of Don Pep'. And he is no sooner inside the joint than right at his heels steps nobody in all this world but Don Pep', who has a licence to be laying up against the areaway grating as dead as a doornail.

Well, old Don Pep' is huddled up in his cape and whiskers as usual, but he seems to be stepping spryer than somewhat, and as Ignaz the Wolf turns around and sees him and lets out a yell, thinking he is seeing a ghost, Don Pep' closes in on him and grabs Ignaz as if he is giving him a nice hearty hug. Ignaz the Wolf screams once very loud, and the next thing anybody knows he is stretched out on the floor as stiff as a board and Don Pep' is stepping out of the cigar store.

Nobody ever sees Don Pep' again as far as I know, although the coppers still have the straw-stuffed black suit, and the black hat and cape, as well as the false whiskers with which Sutari, the shoe shiner, fixes up a phony Don Pep' to lean against the areaway grating for Ignaz the Wolf and his gunners to waste their buckshot on, because it seems from what Sutari says that Don Pep' carries two outfits of clothes for just such a purpose. Personally, I consider this very deceitful of Don Pep', but nobody else seems to see anything wrong in it.

Well, when the croakers examine Ignaz's body they do not find a mark of any kind on him, and they are greatly puzzled indeed, because naturally they expect to find a knife or maybe a darning-needle sticking in him. But there is nothing whatever to show what makes Ignaz the Wolf die, and Marco tells me afterward that his old man and all the other Moustache Petes are laughing very heartily at the idea that Don Pep' uses any such articles.

Marco tells me his old man says if the croakers have any sense they will see at once that Ignaz the Wolf dies of heart disease, and Marco says his old man claims anybody ought to know this heart disease is caused by fright because Don Pep' is putting guys in their places in such a way for many years. Furthermore, Marco says his old man states that this is according to the old-fashioned rules, and very dignified, though if you ask me I think it is a dirty trick to scare a guy to death.

Baseball Hattie

It comes on spring-time, and the little birdies are singing in the trees in Central Park, and the grass is green all around and about, and I am at the Polo Grounds on the opening day of the baseball season, when who do I behold but Baseball Hattie. I am somewhat surprised at this spectacle, as it is years since I see Baseball Hattie, and for all I know she long ago passes to a better and happier world.

But there she is, as large as life, and in fact twenty pounds larger, and when I call the attention of Armand Fibleman, the gambler, to her, he gets up and tears right out of the joint as if he sees a ghost, for if there is one thing Armand Fibleman loathes and despises, it is a ghost.

I can see that Baseball Hattie is greatly changed, and to tell the truth, I can see that she is getting to be nothing but an old bag. Her hair that is once as black as a yard up a stove-pipe is grey, and she is wearing gold-rimmed cheaters, although she seems to be pretty well dressed and looks as if she may be in the money a little bit, at that.

But the greatest change in her is the way she sits there very quiet all afternoon, never once opening her yap, even when many of the customers around her are claiming that Umpire William Klem is Public Enemy No. 1 to 16 inclusive, because they think he calls a close one against the Giants. I

am wondering if maybe Baseball Hattie is stricken dumb somewhere back down the years, because I can remember when she is usually making speeches in the grandstand in favour of hanging such characters as Umpire William Klem when they call close ones against the Giants. But Hattie just sits there as if she is in a church while the public clamour goes on about her, and she does not as much as cry out robber, or even you big bum at Umpire William Klem.

I see many a baseball bug in my time, male and female, but without doubt the worst bug of them all is Baseball Hattie, and you can say it again. She is most particularly a bug about the Giants, and she never misses a game they play at the Polo Grounds, and in fact she sometimes bobs up watching them play in other cities, which is always very embarrassing to the Giants, as they fear the customers in these cities may get the wrong impression of New York womanhood after listening to Baseball Hattie a while.

The first time I ever see Baseball Hattie to pay any attention to her is in Philadelphia, a matter of twenty-odd years back, when the Giants are playing a series there, and many citizens of New York, including Armand Fibleman and myself, are present, because the Philadelphia customers are great hands for betting on baseball games in those days, and Armand Fibleman figures he may knock a few of them in the creek.

Armand Fibleman is a character who will bet on baseball games from who-laid-the-chunk, and in fact he will bet on anything whatever, because Armand Fibleman is a gambler

by trade and has been such since infancy. Personally, I will not bet you four dollars on a baseball game, because in the first place I am not apt to have four dollars, and in the second place I consider horse races a much sounder investment, but I often go around and about with Armand Fibleman, as he is a friend of mine, and sometimes he gives me a little piece of one of his bets for nothing.

Well, what happens in Philadelphia but the umpire forfeits the game in the seventh innings to the Giants by a score of nine to nothing when the Phillies are really leading by five runs, and the reason the umpire takes this action is because he orders several of the Philadelphia players to leave the field for calling him a scoundrel and a rat and a snake in the grass, and also a baboon, and they refuse to take their departure, as they still have more names to call him.

Right away the Philadelphia customers become infuriated in a manner you will scarcely believe, for ordinarily a Philadelphia baseball customer is as quiet as a lamb, no matter what you do to him, and in fact in those days a Philadelphia baseball customer is only considered as somebody to do something to.

But these Philadelphia customers are so infuriated that they not only chase the umpire under the stand, but they wait in the street outside the baseball orchard until the Giants change into their street clothes and come out of the clubhouse. Then the Philadelphia customers begin pegging rocks, and one thing and another, at the Giants, and it is a most exciting and disgraceful scene that is spoken of for years afterward.

Well, the Giants march along towards the North Philly station to catch a train for home, dodging the rocks and one thing and another the best they can, and wondering why the Philadelphia gendarmes do not come to the rescue, until somebody notices several gendarmes among the customers doing some of the throwing themselves, so the Giants realize that this is a most inhospitable community, to be sure.

Finally all of them get inside the North Philly station and are safe, except a big, tall, left-handed pitcher by the name of Haystack Duggeler, who just reports to the club the day before and who finds himself surrounded by quite a posse of these infuriated Philadelphia customers, and who is unable to make them understand that he is nothing but a rookie, because he has a Missouri accent, and besides, he is half paralysed with fear.

One of the infuriated Philadelphia customers is armed with a brickbat and is just moving forward to maim Haystack Duggeler with this instrument, when who steps into the situation but Baseball Hattie, who is also on her way to the station to catch a train, and who is greatly horrified by the assault on the Giants.

She seizes the brickbat from the infuriated Philadelphia customer's grasp, and then tags the customer smack-dab between the eyes with his own weapon, knocking him so unconscious that I afterward hear he does not recover for two weeks, and that he remains practically an imbecile the rest of his days.

Then Baseball Hattie cuts loose on the other infuriated Philadelphia customers with language that they never before hear in those parts, causing them to disperse without further ado, and after the last customer is beyond the sound of her voice, she takes Haystack Duggeler by the pitching arm and personally escorts him to the station.

Now out of this incident is born a wonderful romance between Baseball Hattie and Haystack Duggeler, and in fact it is no doubt love at first sight, and about this period Haystack Duggeler begins burning up the league with his pitching, and at the same time giving Manager Mac plenty of headaches, including the romance with Baseball Hattie, because anybody will tell you that a left-hander is tough enough on a manager without a romance, and especially a romance with Baseball Hattie.

It seems that the trouble with Hattie is she is in business up in Harlem, and this business consists of a boarding-and-rooming-house where ladies and gentlemen board and room, and personally I never see anything out of line in the matter, but the rumour somehow gets around, as rumours will do, that in the first place it is not a boarding-and-rooming-house, and in the second place that the ladies and gentlemen who room and board there are by no means ladies and gentlemen, and especially ladies.

Well, this rumour becomes a terrible knock to Baseball Hattie's social reputation. Furthermore, I hear Manager Mac sends for her and requests her to kindly lay off his ball-players, and especially off a character who can make a

baseball sing high C like Haystack Duggeler. In fact, I hear Manager Mac gives her such a lecture on her civic duty to New York and to the Giants that Baseball Hattie sheds tears, and promises she will never give Haystack another tumble the rest of the season.

'You know me, Mac,' Baseball Hattie says. 'You know I will cut off my nose rather than do anything to hurt your club. I sometimes figure I am in love with this big bloke, but,' she says, 'maybe it is only gas pushing up around my heart. I will take something for it. To hell with him, Mac!' she says.

So she does not see Haystack Duggeler again, except at a distance, for a long time, and he goes on to win fourteen games in a row, pitching a no-hitter and four two-hitters among them, and hanging up a reputation as a great pitcher, and also as a 100 per cent. heel.

Haystack Duggeler is maybe twenty-five at this time, and he comes to the big league with more bad habits than anybody in the history of the world is able to acquire in such a short time. He is especially a great rumpot, and after he gets going good in the league, he is just as apt to appear for a game all mulled up as not.

He is fond of all forms of gambling, such as playing cards and shooting craps, but after they catch him with a deck of readers in a poker game and a pair of tops in a crap game, none of the Giants will play with him any more, except of course when there is nobody else to play with.

He is ignorant about many little things, such as reading and writing and geography and mathematics, as Haystack Duggeler himself admits he never goes to school any more than he can help, but he is so wise when it comes to larceny that I always figure they must have great tutors back in Haystack's old home town of Booneville, Mo.

And no smarter jobbie ever breathes than Haystack when he is out there pitching. He has so much speed that he just naturally throws the ball past a batter before he can get the old musket off his shoulder, and along with his hard one, Haystack has a curve like the letter Q. With two ounces of brains, Haystack Duggeler will be the greatest pitcher that ever lives.

Well, as far as Baseball Hattie is concerned, she keeps her word about not seeing Haystack, although sometimes when he is mulled up he goes around to her boarding-and-rooming-house, and tries to break down the door.

On days when Haystack Duggeler is pitching, she is always in her favourite seat back of third, and while she roots hard for the Giants no matter who is pitching, she puts on extra steam when Haystack is bending them over, and it is quite an experience to hear her crying lay them in there, Haystack, old boy, and strike this big tramp out, Haystack, and other exclamations of a similar nature, which please Haystack quite some, but annoy Baseball Hattie's neighbours back of third base, such as Armand Fibleman, if he happens to be betting on the other club.

A month before the close of his first season in the big league, Haystack Duggeler gets so ornery that Manager Mac suspends him, hoping maybe it will cause Haystack to do a little thinking, but naturally Haystack is unable to do this, because he has nothing to think with. About a week later, Manager Mac gets to noticing how he can use a few ball games, so he starts looking for Haystack Duggeler, and he finds him tending bar on Eighth Avenue with his uniform hung up back of the bar as an advertisement.

The baseball writers speak of Haystack as eccentric, which is a polite way of saying he is a screwball, but they consider him a most unique character and are always writing humorous stories about him, though any one of them will lay you plenty of 9 to 5 that Haystack winds up an umbay. The chances are they will raise their price a little, as the season closes and Haystack is again under suspension with cold weather coming on and not a dime in his pants' pockets.

It is some time along in the winter that Baseball Hattie hauls off and marries Haystack Duggeler, which is a great surprise to one and all, but not nearly as much of a surprise as when Hattie closes her boarding-and-rooming-house and goes to live in a little apartment with Haystack Duggeler up on Washington Heights.

It seems that she finds Haystack one frosty night sleeping in a hallway, after being around slightly mulled up for several weeks, and she takes him to her home and gets him a bath and a shave and a clean shirt and two boiled eggs and some toast and coffee and a shot or two of rye whisky, all of

which is greatly appreciated by Haystack, especially the rye whisky.

Then Haystack proposes marriage to her and takes a paralysed oath that if she becomes his wife he will reform, so what with loving Haystack anyway, and with the fix commencing to request more dough off the boarding-and-rooming-house business than the business will stand, Hattie takes him at his word, and there you are.

The baseball writers are wondering what Manager Mac will say when he hears these tidings, but all Mac says is that Haystack cannot possibly be any worse married than he is single-o, and then Mac has the club office send the happy couple a little paper money to carry them over the winter.

Well, what happens but a great change comes over Haystack Duggeler. He stops bending his elbow and helps Hattie cook and wash the dishes, and holds her hand when they are in the movies, and speaks of his love for her several times a week, and Hattie is as happy as nine dollars' worth of lettuce. Manager Mac is so delighted at the change in Haystack that he has the club office send over more paper money, because Mac knows that with Haystack in shape he is sure of twenty-five games, and maybe the pennant.

In late February, Haystack reports to the training camp down South still as sober as some judges, and the other ball-players are so impressed by the change in him that they admit him to their poker game again. But of course it is too much to expect a man to alter his entire course of living all at

once, and it is not long before Haystack discovers four nines in his hand on his own deal and breaks up the game.

He brings Baseball Hattie with him to the camp, and this is undoubtedly a slight mistake, as it seems the old rumour about her boarding-and-rooming-house business gets around among the ever-loving wives of the other players, and they put on a large chill for her. In fact, you will think Hattie has the smallpox.

Naturally, Baseball Hattie feels the frost, but she never lets on, as it seems she runs into many bigger and better frosts than this in her time. Then Haystack Duggeler notices it, and it seems that it makes him a little peevish towards Baseball Hattie, and in fact it is said that he gives her a slight pasting one night in their room, partly because she has no better social standing and partly because he is commencing to cop a few sneaks on the local corn now and then, and Hattie chides him for same.

Well, about this time it appears that Baseball Hattie discovers that she is going to have a baby, and as soon as she recovers from her astonishment, she decides that it is to be a boy who will be a great baseball player, maybe a pitcher, although Hattie admits she is willing to compromise on a good second baseman.

She also decides that his name is to be Derrill Duggeler, after his paw, as it seems Derrill is Haystack's real name, and he is only called Haystack because he claims he once makes

a living stacking hay, although the general opinion is that all he ever stacks is cards.

It is really quite remarkable what a belt Hattie gets out of the idea of having this baby, though Haystack is not excited about the matter. He is not paying much attention to Baseball Hattie by now, except to give her a slight pasting now and then, but Hattie is so happy about the baby that she does not mind these pastings.

Haystack Duggeler meets up with Armand Fibleman along in midsummer. By this time, Haystack discovers horse racing and is always making bets on the horses, and naturally he is generally broke, and then I commence running into him in different spots with Armand Fibleman, who is now betting higher than a cat's back on baseball games.

It is late August, and the Giants are fighting for the front end of the league, and an important series with Brooklyn is coming up, and everybody knows that Haystack Duggeler will work in anyway two games of the series, as Haystack can generally beat Brooklyn just by throwing his glove on the mound. There is no doubt but what he has the old Indian sign on Brooklyn, and the night before the first game, which he is sure to work, the gamblers along Broadway are making the Giants 2-to-l favourites to win the game.

This same night before the game, Baseball Hattie is home in her little apartment on Washington Heights waiting for Haystack to come in and eat a delicious dinner of pigs' knuckles and sauerkraut, which she personally prepares for

him. In fact, she hurries home right after the ball game to get this delicacy ready, because Haystack tells her he will surely come home this particular night, although Hattie knows he is never better than even money to keep his word about anything.

But sure enough, in he comes while the pigs' knuckles and sauerkraut are still piping hot, and Baseball Hattie is surprised to see Armand Fibleman with him, as she knows Armand backwards and forwards and does not care much for him, at that. However, she can say the same thing about four million other characters in this town, so she makes Armand welcome, and they sit down and put on the pigs' knuckles and sauerkraut together, and a pleasant time is enjoyed by one and all. In fact, Baseball Hattie puts herself out to entertain Armand Fibleman, because he is the first guest Haystack ever brings home.

Well, Armand Fibleman can be very pleasant when he wishes, and he speaks very nicely to Hattie. Naturally, he sees that Hattie is expecting, and in fact he will have to be blind not to see it, and he seems greatly interested in this matter and asks Hattie many questions, and Hattie is delighted to find somebody to talk to about what is coming off with her, as Haystack will never listen to any of her remarks on the subject.

So Armand Fibleman gets to hear all about Baseball Hattie's son, and how he is to be a great baseball player, and Armand says is that so, and how nice, and all this and that, until Haystack Duggeler speaks up as follows and to wit:

'Oh, daggone her son!' Haystack says. 'It is going to be a girl, anyway, so let us dismiss this topic and get down to business. Hat,' he says, 'you fan yourself into the kitchen and wash the dishes, while Armand and me talk.'

So Hattie goes into the kitchen, leaving Haystack and Armand sitting there talking, and what are they talking about but a proposition for Haystack to let the Brooklyn club beat him the next day so Armand Fibleman can take the odds and clean up a nice little gob of money, which he is to split with Haystack.

Hattie can hear every word they say, as the kitchen is next door to the dining-room where they are sitting, and at first she thinks they are joking, because at this time nobody ever even as much as thinks of skullduggery in baseball, or anyway, not much.

It seems that at first Haystack is not in favour of the idea, but Armand Fibleman keeps mentioning money that Haystack owes him for bets on the horse races, and he asks Haystack how he expects to continue betting on the races without fresh money, and Armand also speaks of the great injustice that is being done Haystack by the Giants in not paying him twice the salary he is getting, and how the loss of one or two games is by no means such a great calamity.

Well, finally Baseball Hattie hears Haystack say all right, but he wishes a thousand dollars then and there as a guarantee, and Armand Fibleman says this is fine, and they will go downtown and he will get the money at once, and

now Hattie realizes that maybe they are in earnest, and she pops out of the kitchen and speaks as follows:

'Gentlemen,' Hattie says, 'you seem to be sober, but I guess you are drunk. If you are not drunk, you must both be daffy to think of such a thing as phenagling around with a baseball game.'

'Hattie,' Haystack says, 'kindly close your trap and go back in the kitchen, or I will give you a bust in the nose.'

And with this he gets up and reaches for his hat, and Armand Fibleman gets up too, and Hattie says like this:

'Why, Haystack,' she says, 'you are not really serious in this matter, are you?'

'Of course I am serious,' Haystack says. 'I am sick and tired of pitching for starvation wages, and besides, I will win a lot of games later on to make up for the one I lose to-morrow. Say,' he says, 'these Brooklyn bums may get lucky to-morrow and knock me loose from my pants, anyway, no matter what I do, so what difference does it make?'

'Haystack,' Baseball Hattie says, 'I know you are a liar and a drunkard and a cheat and no account generally, but nobody can tell me you will sink so low as to purposely toss off a ball game. Why, Haystack, baseball is always on the level. It is the most honest game in all this world. I guess you are just ribbing me, because you know how much I love it.'

'Dry up!' Haystack says to Hattie. 'Furthermore, do not expect me home again to-night. But anyway, dry up.'

'Look, Haystack,' Hattie says, 'I am going to have a son. He is your son and my son, and he is going to be a great ball-player when he grows up, maybe a greater pitcher than you are, though I hope and trust he is not left-handed. He will have your name. If they find out you toss off a game for money, they will throw you out of baseball and you will be disgraced. My son will be known as the son of a crook, and what chance will he have in baseball? Do you think I am going to allow you to do this to him, and to the game that keeps me from going nutty for marrying you?'

Naturally, Haystack Duggeler is greatly offended by Hattie's crack about her son being maybe a greater pitcher than he is, and he is about to take steps, when Armand Fibleman stops him. Armand Fibleman is commencing to be somewhat alarmed at Baseball Hattie's attitude, and he gets to thinking that he hears that people in her delicate condition are often irresponsible, and he fears that she may blow a whistle on this enterprise without realizing what she is doing. So he undertakes a few soothing remarks to her.

'Why, Hattie,' Armand Fibleman says, 'nobody can possibly find out about this little matter, and Haystack will have enough money to send your son to college, if his markers at the race track do not take it all. Maybe you better lie down and rest a while,' Armand says.

But Baseball Hattie does not as much as look at Armand, though she goes on talking to Haystack. 'They always find out thievery, Haystack,' she says, 'especially when you are dealing with a fink like Fibleman. If you deal with him once, you will have to deal with him again and again, and he will be the first to holler copper on you, because he is a stool pigeon in his heart.'

'Haystack,' Armand Fibleman says, 'I think we better be going.'

'Haystack,' Hattie says, 'you can go out of here and stick up somebody or commit a robbery or a murder, and I will still welcome you back and stand by you. But if you are going out to steal my son's future, I advise you not to go.'

'Dry up!' Haystack says. 'I am going.'

'All right, Haystack,' Hattie says, very calm. 'But just step into the kitchen with me and let me say one little word to you by yourself, and then I will say no more.'

Well, Haystack Duggeler does not care for even just one little word more, but Armand Fibleman wishes to get this disagreeable scene over with, so he tells Haystack to let her have her word, and Haystack goes into the kitchen with Hattie, and Armand cannot hear what is said, as she speaks very low, but he hears Haystack laugh heartily and then Haystack comes out of the kitchen, still laughing, and tells Armand he is ready to go.

As they start for the door, Baseball Hattie outs with a long-nosed .38-calibre Colt's revolver, and goes root-a-toot-toot with it, and the next thing anybody knows, Haystack is on the floor yelling bloody murder, and Armand Fibleman is leaving the premises without bothering to open the door. In fact, the landlord afterward talks some of suing Haystack Duggeler because of the damage Armand Fibleman does to the door. Armand himself afterward admits that when he slows down for a breather a couple of miles down Broadway he finds splinters stuck all over him.

Well, the doctors come, and the gendarmes come, and there is great confusion, especially as Baseball Hattie is sobbing so she can scarcely make a statement, and Haystack Duggeler is so sure he is going to die that he cannot think of anything to say except oh-oh-oh, but finally the landlord remembers seeing Armand leave with his door, and everybody starts questioning Hattie about this until she confesses that Armand is there all right, and that he tries to bribe Haystack to toss off a ball game, and that she then suddenly finds herself with a revolver in her hand, and everything goes black before her eyes, and she can remember no more until somebody is sticking a bottle of smelling salts under her nose.

Naturally, the newspaper reporters put two and two together, and what they make of it is that Hattie tries to plug Armand Fibleman for his rascally offer, and that she misses Armand and gets Haystack, and right away Baseball Hattie is a great heroine, and Haystack is a great hero, though nobody thinks to ask Haystack how he stands on the bribe proposition, and he never brings it up himself.

And nobody will ever offer Haystack any more bribes, for after the doctors get through with him he is shy a left arm from the shoulder down, and he will never pitch a baseball again, unless he learns to pitch right-handed.

The newspapers make quite a lot of Baseball Hattie protecting the fair name of baseball. The National League plays a benefit game for Haystack Duggeler and presents him with a watch and a purse of twenty-five thousand dollars, which Baseball Hattie grabs away from him, saying it is for her son, while Armand Fibleman is in bad with one and all.

Baseball Hattie and Haystack Duggeler move to the Pacific Coast, and this is all there is to the story, except that one day some years ago, and not long before he passes away in Los Angeles, a respectable grocer, I run into Haystack when he is in New York on a business trip, and I say to him like this:

'Haystack,' I say, 'it is certainly a sin and a shame that Hattie misses Armand Fibleman that night and puts you on the shelf. The chances are that but for this little accident you will hang up one of the greatest pitching records in the history of baseball. Personally,' I say, 'I never see a better left-handed pitcher.'

'Look,' Haystack says. 'Hattie does not miss Fibleman. It is a great newspaper story and saves my name, but the truth is she hits just where she aims. When she calls me into the kitchen before I start out with Fibleman, she shows me a revolver I never before know she has, and says to me, "Haystack," she says, "if you leave with this weasel on the

errand you mention, I am going to fix you so you will never make another wrong move with your pitching arm. I am going to shoot it off for you."

'I laugh heartily,' Haystack says. 'I think she is kidding me, but I find out different. By the way,' Haystack says, 'I afterward learn that long before I meet her, Hattie works for three years in a shooting gallery at Coney Island. She is really a remarkable broad,' Haystack says.

I guess I forget to state that the day Baseball Hattie is at the Polo Grounds she is watching the new kid sensation of the big leagues, Derrill Duggeler, shut out Brooklyn with three hits.

He is a wonderful young left-hander.

Situation Wanted

One evening in the summer of 1936 I am passing in front of Mindy's restaurant on Broadway when the night manager suddenly opens the door and throws a character in a brown suit at me.

Fortunately, the character just misses me, and hits a yellow short that is standing at the kerb, and dents a mudguard,

because he is a little character, and the night manager of Mindy's can throw that kind with an incurve.

Naturally, I am greatly vexed, and I am thinking of stepping into Mindy's and asking the night manager how dare he hurl missiles of this nature at me, when I remember that the night manager does not care for me, either, and in fact he hates me from head to foot, and does not permit me in Mindy's except on Fridays, because of course he does not have the heart to keep me from enjoying my chicken soup with matzoth dumplings once a week.

So I let the incident pass, and watch the jockey of the yellow short nail the character in the brown suit with a left hook that knocks him right under my feet, and then, as he gets up and dusts himself off with his hands and starts up the street, I see that he is nobody but a character by the name of Asleep, who is called by this name because he always goes around with his eyes half closed, and looking as if he is dozing off.

Well, here is a spectacle that really brings tears to my eyes, as I can remember when just a few years back the name of Asleep strikes terror to the hearts of one and all on Broadway, and everywhere else in this town for that matter, because in those days he is accounted one of the greatest characters in his line in the world, and in fact he is generally regarded as a genius.

Asleep's line is taking care of anybody that somebody wishes taken care of, and at one time he is the highest-priced

character in the business. For several years along in the late 'twenties, he handles all of the late Dave the Dude's private business when Dave the Dude is at war with the late Big Moey, and when somebody finally takes care of Dave the Dude himself, Asleep is with Moey for quite a while.

In six or seven years, the chances are Asleep takes care of scores of characters of one kind and another, and he never looks for any publicity or glory. In fact, he is always a most retiring character, who goes about very quietly, minding his own affairs, and those who know him think very well of him indeed.

The bladders print many unkind stories about Asleep when he is finally lumbered in 1931 and sent to college, and some of them call him a torpedo, and a trigger, and I do not know what all else, and these names hurt Asleep's feelings, especially as they seem to make him out no better than a ruffian. In fact, one bladder speaks of him as a killer, and this tide causes Asleep to wince more than anything else.

He is in college at Dannemora from 1931 until the late spring of 1936, and although I hear he is back, this is the first time I see him in person, and I hasten to overtake him to express my sympathy with him on his treatment by the night manager of Mindy's and also by the jockey of the yellow short, and to deplore the lack of respect now shown on Broadway for a character such as Asleep.

He seems glad to see me, and he accepts my expressions gratefully, and we go into the Bridle Grill and have a couple

of drinks and then Asleep says to me like this:

'I only go into Mindy's seeking a situation,' he says. 'I hear Benny Barker, the bookie, is in there, and I understand that he has a disagreement with another bookie by the name of Jersey Cy down at Aqueduct, and that Jersey Cy punches Benny's beezer for him. So,' Asleep says, 'I figure Benny will wish to have Cy taken care of immediately and that it will be a nice quick pickup for me, because in the old days when Benny is a bootie, he is one of my best customers.

'It is the first time I see Benny since I get back,' Asleep says, 'but instead of being glad to see me, he seems very distant to me, and the minute I begin canvassing him for the business, he turns as white as one of Mindy's napkins, and in fact whiter, and says for me to get out of there, or he will call the law.

'Benny says he will never even dream of such a thing as having anybody taken care of, and,' Asleep says, 'when I start to remind him of a couple of incidents back down the years, he carries on in a way you will never believe. I even offer to cut my fee for him,' Asleep says, 'but Benny only gets more excited, and keeps yelling no, no, no, until the night manager appears, and you see for yourself what happens to me. I am publicly embarrassed,' he says.

'Well, Sleeps,' I say, 'to tell the truth, I am somewhat amazed that you do not out with that thing and resent these familiarities.'

But Asleep seems somewhat horrified at this suggestion, and he sets his glass down, and gazes at me a while in pained silence, and finally he says:

'Why,' he says, 'I hope and trust that you do not think I will ever use that thing except for professional purposes, and when I am paid for same. Why,' he says, 'in all my practice, covering a matter of nearly ten years, I never lift a finger against as much as a flea unless it is a business proposition, and I am not going to begin now.'

Well, I remember that this is indeed Asleep's reputation in the old days, and that a midget can walk up to him and tweak his ear without running any risk, and of course I am bound to respect his ethics, although I am sorry he cannot see his way clear to making an exception in the case of the night manager of Mindy's.

'I do not understand the way times change since I am in college,' Asleep says. 'Nobody around here wishes anybody taken care of any more. I call on quite a number of old customers of mine before I visit Benny Barker, but they have nothing for me, and none of them suggests that I call again. I fear I am *passé*,' Asleep says. 'Yet I am the one who first brings the idea to Brooklyn of putting them in the sack. I originate picking them off in barber chairs. I am always first and foremost with innovations in my business, and now there is no business.

'It is a tough break for me,' Asleep says, 'just when I happen to need a situation more than at any other time in my

life. I simply must make good,' he says, 'because I am in love and wish to be married. I am in love with Miss Anna Lark, who dances behind bubbles over in the Starlight Restaurant. Yes,' he says, 'Miss Anna Lark is my sweet-pea, and she loves me as dearly as I love her, or anyway,' he says, 'she so states no longer ago than two hours.'

'Well,' I say, 'Miss Anna Lark has a shape that is a lulu. Even behind bubbles,' I say, and this is a fact that is well known to one and all on Broadway, but I do not consider it necessary to mention to Asleep that it is also pretty well known along Broadway that Benny Barker, the bookie, is deeply interested in Miss Anna Lark, and, to tell the truth, is practically off his onion about her, because I am by no means a chirper.

'I often notice her shape myself,' Asleep says. 'In fact, it is one of the things that starts our romance before I go away to college. It seems to me it is better then than it is now, but,' he says, 'a shape is not everything in this life, although I admit it is never any knock. Miss Anna Lark waits patiently for me all the time I am away, and once she writes me a screeve, so you can see that this is undoubtedly true love.

'But,' Asleep says, 'Miss Anna Lark now wishes to abandon the bubble dodge, and return to her old home in Miami, Florida, where her papa is in the real-estate business. Miss Anna Lark feels that there is no future behind bubbles, especially,' he says, 'since she recently contracts arthritis in both knees from working in drafty night-clubs. And she wishes me to go to Miami, Florida, too, and perhaps engage

in the real-estate business like her papa, and acquire some scratch so we can be married, and raise up children, and all this and that, and be happy ever after.

'But,' Asleep says, 'it is very necessary for me to get hold of a taw to make a start, and at this time I do not have as much as two white quarters to rub together in my pants' pocket, and neither has Miss Anna Lark, and from what I hear, the same thing goes for Miss Anna Lark's papa, and with conditions in my line what they are, I am greatly depressed, and scarcely know which way to turn.'

Well, naturally, I feel very sorry for Asleep, but I can offer no suggestions of any value at the moment, and in fact the best I can do is to stake him to a few dibs for walk-about money, and then I leave him in the Bridle Grill looking quite sad and forlorn, to be sure.

I do not see Asleep for several months after this, and am wondering what becomes of him, and I watch the bladders for news of happenings that may indicate he finally gets a break, but nothing of interest appears, and then one day I run into him at Broadway and Forty-sixth Street.

He is all sharpened up in new clothes, and a fresh shave, and he is carrying a suitcase, and looks very prosperous, indeed, and he seems happy to see me, and leads me around into Dinty Moore's, and sits me down at a table, and orders up some drinks, and then he says to me like this:

'Now,' he says, 'I will tell you what happens. After you leave me in the Bridle Grill, I sit down and take to reading one of the evening bladders, and what I read about is a war in a place by the name of Spain, and from what I read, I can see that it is a war between two different mobs living in this Spain, each of which wishes to control the situation. It reminds me of Chicago the time Big Moey sends me out to Al.

'Thinks I to myself,' Asleep says, 'where there is a war of this nature, there may be employment for a character of my experience, and I am sitting there pondering this matter when who comes in looking for me but Benny Barker, the bookie.

'Well,' Asleep says, 'Benny states that he gets to thinking of me after I leave Mindy's, and he says he remembers that he really has a soft place in his heart for me, and that while he has no business for me any more, he will be glad to stake me to go wherever I think I may find something, and I remember what I am just reading in the evening bladder, and I say all right, Spain.

'"Where is this Spain?" Benny Barker asks.

'Well,' Asleep says, 'of course I do not know where it is myself, so we inquire of Professor D, the educated horse player, and he says it is to hell and gone from here. He says it is across the sea, and Benny Barker says he will arrange my passage there at once, and furthermore that he will give me a thousand slugs in ready, and I can pay him back at my convenience. Afterward,' Asleep says, 'I recall that Benny

Barker seems greatly pleased that I am going far away, but I figure his conscience hurts him for the manner in which he rebuffs me in Mindy's, and he wishes to round himself up with me.

'So I go to this Spain,' Asleep says, 'and now,' he says, 'if you wish to hear any more, I will be glad to oblige.'

Well, I tell Asleep that if he will keep calling the waiter at regular intervals, he may proceed, and Asleep proceeds as follows:

I go to this Spain seeking employment, and you will scarcely believe the trouble and inconvenience I am put to in getting there. I go by way of a ship that takes me to France, which is a place I remember somewhat, because I visit there in my early youth, in 1918, with the 77th Division, and which is a nice place, at that, especially the *Folies-Bergère*, and I go across France and down to a little jerk-water town just over the border from this Spain, and who do I run into sitting in front of a small gin-mill in the town but a Spanish character by the name of Manuel something.

He is once well known along Broadway as a heavy-weight fighter, and he is by no means a bad fighter in his day, and he now has a pair of scrambled ears to prove it. Furthermore, he is bobbing slightly, and seems to have a few marbles in his mouth, but he is greatly pleased to see me.

Manuel speaks English very good, considering the marbles, and he tells me he is personally in the fighting in this Spain for several weeks, but he is unable to find out what he is fighting about, so finally he gets tired, and is over in France taking a recess, and when I tell him I am going to this Spain, and what for, he says he has no doubt I will do very nice for myself, because of course Manuel knows my reputation in the old days in New York.

Furthermore, he says he will go with me, and act as my manager, and maybe take a piece of my earnings, just as his American managers do with him when he is active in the ring, and when I ask him what he calls a piece, he says 65 per cent. is the way his American managers always slice him, but naturally I do not agree to any such terms. Still, I can see that Manuel is such a character as may come in handy to me, what with knowing how to speak Spanish, as well as English, so I say I will look out for him very nicely when the time comes for a settlement, and this satisfies him.

We go across the border into this Spain by night, and Manuel says he will lead me to a spot where the fighting is very good, and by and by we come to a fair-sized town, with houses, and steeples, and all this and that, and which has a name I do not remember, and which I cannot pronounce, even if I do remember it.

Manuel says we are now in the war, and in fact I can hear shooting going on although it does not seem to be interfering with public business in the town, as many characters, male and female, are walking around and about, and up and down,

and back and forth, and none of them seem to be disturbed by anything much.

But Manuel and I follow the sound of the shooting, and finally we come upon a large number of characters behind a breastworks made out of sandbags, and they all have rifles in their hands, and are shooting now and then at a big stone building on a high hill about three blocks away, and from this building also comes a lot of firing, and there are occasional bur-ur-ur-ups on both sides that I recognize as machine-guns, and bullets are zinging about the sandbags quite some.

Well, Manuel says this is some of the war, but all the characters behind the sandbags seem to be taking things easy, and in fact some are sitting in chairs and firing their rifles from a rest over the bags while so seated, and thinks I to myself, this is a very leisurely war, to be sure.

But about two blocks from the breastworks, and on a rise of ground almost as high as the hill the building is on, there is a field-gun, and this is also firing on the building about every fifteen minutes, and I can see that it seems to be doing some real damage, at that, what with knocking off pieces of the architecture, and punching holes in the roof, although now and then it lets go a shell that misses the mark in a way that will never be tolerated by the character who commands the battery I serve with in France.

Many of the characters behind the sandbags seem to know Manuel, who appears to be a famous character in this Spain, and they stop shooting, and gather about him, and there is

much conversation among them, which of course I do not understand, so after a while I request Manuel to pay more attention to me and to kindly explain the situation I find here.

Well, Manuel says the building on the hill is an old castle and that it is being held by a lot of Spanish characters, male and female, who are as mad at the characters behind the sandbags as the Republicans are mad at the Democrats in my country, and maybe madder. Manuel says the characters in the castle represent one side of the war in this Spain, and the characters behind the sandbags represent the other side, although Manuel does not seem to know which is which, and naturally I do not care.

'Well,' I say to Manuel, 'this *is* a good place to start business. Tell them who I am,' I say, 'and ask them how much they will give me for taking care of these parties in the castle.'

So Manuel makes quite a speech, and while I do not understand what he is saying, I can see that he is putting me away with them very good, because they are gazing at me with great interest and respect. When he concludes his speech they give me a big cheer and crowd around me shaking hands, and I see Manuel talking with some characters who seem to be the mains in this situation, and they are listening eagerly to his remarks, and nodding their heads, and Manuel says to me like this:

'Well,' Manuel says, 'I tell them you are the greatest American gangster that ever lives, and that they undoubtedly

see you often in the movies, and they are in favour of your proposition one hundred per cent. They are anxious to see how you operate,' Manuel says, 'because they wish to install similar methods in this country when things get settled down.'

'Kindly omit referring to me as a gangster,' I say. 'It is a most uncouth word, and besides I never operate with a gang in my life.'

'Well, all right,' Manuel says, 'but it is a word they understand. However,' he says, 'the trouble here is they do not have much *dinero*, which is money. In fact, they say the best they can offer you to take care of the parties in the castle is two pesetas per head.'

'How much is two pesetas?' I ask.

'The last time I am here, it is about forty cents in your language,' Manuel says.

Naturally, I am very indignant at this offer, because in my time I get as high as twenty thousand dollars for taking care of a case, and never less than five hundred, except once when I do a favour for one-fifty, but Manuel claims it is not such a bad offer as it sounds, as he says that at the moment two pesetas is by no means alfalfa in this Spain, especially as there are maybe four hundred heads in the castle, counting everything.

Manuel says it really is an exceptional offer as the characters behind the sandbags are anxious to conclude the siege because certain friends of the parties in the castle are arriving in a near-by town, and anyway, sitting behind these sandbags is getting most monotonous to one and all. Furthermore, Manuel says, when they are not sitting behind the sandbags, these characters are required to work every day digging a tunnel into the hill under the castle, and they regard this work as most enervating.

Manuel says the idea of the tunnel is to plant dynamite under the castle and blow it up.

'But you see,' Manuel says, 'digging is no work for proud souls such as Spaniards, so if you can think of some other way of taking care of these parties in the castle, it will be a great relief to my friends here.'

'To the dickens with these skinflints,' I say. 'Let us go to the castle and see what the parties there will give us for taking care of these cheap skates behind the sandbags. Never,' I say, 'will I accept such a reduction.'

Well, Manuel tells the mains behind the sandbags that I will take their offer under consideration, but that I am so favourably disposed towards it that I am going into the castle and examine the surroundings, and this pleases them no little, so Manuel ties his handkerchief on a stick and says this is a flag of truce and will get us into the castle safe and sound, and we set out.

Presently characters appear at the windows, and at holes in the walls of the castle, and Manuel holds a conversation with them in the Spanish language, and by and by they admit us to the castle yard, and one character with whiskers leads us into the building and down stone steps until we arrive in what seems to be a big basement far underground.

And in this basement I behold a very unusual scene to be sure. There are many characters present, male and female, also numerous small children, and they seem to be living in great confusion, but they are greatly interested in us when we appear, especially a tall, thin elderly character with white hair, and a white tash, and a white goatee, who seems to be a character of some authority.

In fact, Manuel says he is nobody but a character by the name of General Pedro Vega, and that this castle is his old family home, and that he is leader of these other characters in the basement.

I can see at once that Manuel and the general are old friends, because they make quite a fuss over meeting up in this manner, and then Manuel introduces me, and delivers another speech about me, explaining what a wonderful character I am. When he gets through, the general turns to me, and in very good English he speaks as follows:

'I am very glad to meet you, Señor Asleep,' he says. 'I once live in your country a couple of years,' he says. 'I live in your Miami, Florida.'

Well, I am glad to find somebody who can talk English, so I can do my own negotiating, and in a few words I state my proposition to the general to take care of the characters behind the sandbags, and call for his bid on same.

'Alas,' the general says, 'money is something we do not have. If you are offering to take care of the enemy at one centavo each,' he says, 'we still cannot pay. I am most regretful. It will be a big convenience to have you take care of the enemy, because we can then escape from this place and join our friends in a near-by city. Our food runs low,' he says. 'So does our ammunition. Some of our females and children are ill. The longer we remain here the worse it gets.

'If I do not know the calibre of the enemy,' he says, 'I will gladly surrender. But,' he says, 'we will then all be backed up against a wall and executed. It is better that we die here.'

Well, being backed up against a wall strikes me as a most undesirable fate, to be sure, but of course it is nothing to me, and all I am thinking of is that this is a very peculiar country where nobody has any scratch, and it is commencing to remind me of home. And I am also thinking that the only thing I can do is to accept the two pesetas per head offered by the characters behind the sandbags when a very beautiful young Judy, with long black hair hanging down her back, approaches and speaks to me at some length in the Spanish language. Manuel says:

'She says,' he says, '"Oh, sir, if you can help us escape from this place you will earn my undying gratitude." She says,'

Manuel says, '"I am in love with a splendid young character by the name of Señor Jose Valdez, who is waiting for me with our friends in the near-by town. We are to be married as soon as the cruel war is over," she says,' Manuel says. 'It seems to be a most meritorious case,' Manuel says.

Now naturally this statement touches my heart no little, because I am in love myself, and besides the young Judy begins weeping, and if there is one thing I cannot stand it is female tears, and in fact my sweet-pea, Miss Anna Lark, can always make me do almost anything she wishes by breaking out crying. But of course business is business in this case, and I cannot let sentiment interfere, so I am about to bid one and all farewell when General Pedro Vega says:

'Wait!'

And with this he disappears into another part of the basement, but is back pretty soon with a small black tin box, and out of this box he takes a batch of papers, and hands them to me, and says:

'Here are the deeds to some property in your Miami, Florida,' he says. 'I pay much money for it in 1925. They tell me at the time I am lucky to get the property at the price, but,' he says, 'I will be honest with you. It is unimproved property, and all I ever get out of it so far is notices that taxes are due, which I always pay promptly. But now I fear I will never get back to your Miami, Florida, again, and if you will take care of enough of the enemy for us to escape, the deeds are yours. This is all I have to offer.'

Well, I say I will take the deeds and study them over and let him know my answer as soon as possible, and then I retire with Manuel, but what I really study more than anything else is the matter of the beautiful young Judy who yearns for her sweet-pea, and there is no doubt but what my studying of her is a point in favour of General Vega's proposition in my book, although I also do some strong studying of the fact that taking care of these characters in the castle is a task that will be very tough.

So after we leave the castle, I ask Manuel if he supposes there is a telegraph office in operation in town, and he says of course there is, or how can the newspaper scribes get their thrilling stories of the war out, so I get him to take me there, and I send a cablegram addressed to Mr. Lark, real estate, Miami, Florida, U.S.A., which reads as follows:

IS FIFTY ACRES LANDSCRABBLE SECTION ANY ACCOUNT

Then there is nothing for me to do but wait around until I get an answer, and this takes several days, and I devote this period to seeing the sights with Manuel, and I wish to say that some of the sights are very interesting. Finally, I drop around to the telegraph office, and sure enough there is a message there for me, collect, which says like this:

LANDSCRABBLE SECTION GREAT POSSIBILITIES STOP WHY LARK

Now I do not know Mr. Lark personally, and he does not know me, and the chances are he never even hears of me before, but I figure that if he is half as smart as his daughter, Miss Anna Lark, his judgment is worth following, so I tell Manuel it looks as if the deal with General Vega is on, and I begin giving my undivided attention to the case.

I can see at once that the key to the whole situation as far as I am concerned is the field-piece on the hill, because there are really too many characters behind the sandbags for me to take care of by myself, or even with the assistance of Manuel, and of course I do not care to get Manuel involved in my personal business affairs any more than I can help.

However, at my request he makes a few innocent inquiries among the characters behind the sandbags, and he learns that there are always seven characters on the hill with the gun, and that they sleep in little home-made shelters made of boards, and canvas, and tin, and one thing and another, and that these shelters are scattered over the top of the hill, and the top of the hill is maybe the width of a baseball diamond.

But I can observe for myself that they do no firing from the hilltop after sundown, and they seldom show any lights, which is maybe because they do not wish to have any aeroplanes come along and drop a few hot apples on them.

Manuel says that the characters behind the sandbags are asking about me, and he says they are so anxious to secure my services that he will not be surprised if I cannot get three

pesetas per head, and I can see that Manuel thinks I am making a mistake not to dicker with them further.

But I tell him I am now committed to General Vega, and I have Manuel obtain a twelve-inch file for me in the city, and also some corks out of wine bottles, and I take the file and hammer it down, and smooth it out, and sharpen it up nicely, and I make a handle for it out of wood, according to my own original ideas, and I take the corks, and burn them good, and I find a big piece of black cloth and make myself a sort of poncho out of this by cutting a hole in the centre for my head to go through.

Then I wait until it comes on a night to suit me, and it is a dark night, and rainy, and blowy, and I black up my face and hands with the burnt cork, and slip the black cloth over my clothes, and put my file down the back of my neck where I can reach it quickly, and make my way very quietly to the foot of the hill on which the field-gun is located.

Now in the darkness, I begin crawling on my hands and knees, and wiggling along on my stomach up the hill, and I wish to state that it is a monotonous task because I can move only a few feet at a clip, and there are many sharp rocks in my path, and once an insect of some nature crawls up my pant leg and gives me a severe nip.

The hill is maybe as high as a two-story building, and very steep, and it takes me over an hour to wiggle my way to the top, and sometimes I pause *en route* and wonder if it is worth it. And then I think of the beautiful young Judy in the castle,

and of the property in Miami, Florida, and of Miss Anna Lark, and I keep on wiggling.

Well, just as Manuel reports, there is a sentry on duty on top of the hill, and I can make out his shape in the darkness leaning on his rifle, and this sentry is a very large character, and at first I figure that he may present difficulties, but when I wiggle up close to him I observe that he seems to be dozing, and it is quiet as can be on the hilltop.

The sentry is really no trouble at all, and then I wiggle my way slowly along in and out of the little shelters, and in some shelters there is but one character, and in others two, and in one, three, and it is these three that confuse me somewhat, as they are three more than the seven Manuel mentions in his census of the scene, and I will overlook them entirely if one of them does not snore more than somewhat.

Personally, I will always say that taking care of these ten characters one after the other, and doing it so quietly that not one of them ever wakes up, is the high spot of my entire career, especially when you consider that I am somewhat rusty from lack of experience, and that my equipment is very crude.

Well, when morning dawns, there I am in charge of the hilltop, and with a field-gun at my disposal, and I discover that it is nothing but a French 75, with which I am quite familiar, and by and by Manuel joins me, and while the characters behind the sandbags are enjoying their breakfast, and the chances are, not thinking of much, I plant four shells

among them so fast I ruin their morning meal, because, if I do say it myself, I am better than a raw hand with a French 75.

Then I remember that the characters who are boring under the castle are perhaps inside the tunnel at this time, so I peg away at the hole in the hill until the front of it caves in and blocks up the hole very neatly, and Manuel afterward claims that I wedged in the entire night-shift.

Well, of course these proceedings are visible to the occupants of the castle, and it is not long before I see General Pedro Vega come marching out of the castle with the whole kit and caboodle of characters, male and female, and small children behind him, and they are laughing and shouting, and crying and carrying on no little.

And the last I see of them as they go hurrying off in the direction of the near-by town where their friends are located, the beautiful young Judy is bringing up the rear and throwing kisses at me and waving a flag, and I ask Manuel to kindly identify this flag for me so I will always remember which side of the war in this Spain it is that I assist.

But Manuel says his eyesight is bad ever since the night Jim Sharkey sticks a thumb in his eye in the fifth round in Madison Square Garden, and from this distance he cannot tell whose flag it is, and in fact, Manuel says, he does not give a Spanish cuss-word.

'And there you are,' Asleep says to me in Dinty Moore's.

'So,' I say, 'you are now back in New York looking for business again?'

'Oh, no,' Asleep says. 'I now reside in Miami, Florida, and I am going to marry Miss Anna Lark next month. I am doing very well for myself, too,' he says. 'You see, we turn the property that I get from General Vega into a cemetery, and I am now selling lots in same for our firm which is headed by Miss Anna Lark's papa. Manuel is our head grave-digger, and we are all very happy,' Asleep says.

Well, afterward I hear that the first lot Asleep sells is to the family of the late Benny Barker, the bookie, who passes away during the race meeting in Miami, Florida, of pneumonia, super-induced by lying out all night in a ditch full of water near the home of Miss Anna Lark, although I also understand that the fact that Benny is tied up in a sack in the ditch is considered a slight contributing cause of his last illness.

A Piece of Pie

On Boylston Street, in the city of Boston, Mass., there is a joint where you can get as nice a broiled lobster as anybody

ever slaps a lip over, and who is in there one evening partaking of this tidbit but a character by the name of Horse Thief and me.

This Horse Thief is called Horsey for short, and he is not called by this name because he ever steals a horse but because it is the consensus of public opinion from coast to coast that he may steal one if the opportunity presents.

Personally, I consider Horsey a very fine character, because any time he is holding anything he is willing to share his good fortune with one and all, and at this time in Boston he is holding plenty. It is the time we make the race meeting at Suffolk Down, and Horsey gets to going very good, indeed, and in fact he is now a character of means, and is my host against the broiled lobster.

Well, at a table next to us are four or five characters who all seem to be well-dressed, and stout-set, and red-faced, and prosperous-looking, and who all speak with the true Boston accent, which consists of many ah's and very few r's. Characters such as these are familiar to anybody who is ever in Boston very much, and they are bound to be politicians, retired cops, or contractors, because Boston is really quite infested with characters of this nature.

I am paying no attention to them, because they are drinking local ale, and talking loud, and long ago I learn that when a Boston character is engaged in aleing himself up, it is a good idea to let him alone, because the best you can get out of him is maybe a boff on the beezer. But Horsey is in there on the

old Ear-ie, and very much interested in their conversation, and finally I listen myself just to hear what is attracting his attention, when one of the characters speaks as follows:

'Well,' he says, 'I am willing to bet ten thousand dollars that he can outeat anybody in the United States any time.'

Now at this, Horsey gets right up and steps over to the table and bows and smiles in a friendly way on one and all, and says:

'Gentlemen,' he says, 'pardon the intrusion, and excuse me for billing in, but,' he says, 'do I understand you are speaking of a great eater who resides in your fair city?'

Well, these Boston characters all gaze at Horsey in such a hostile manner that I am expecting any one of them to get up and request him to let them miss him, but he keeps on bowing and smiling, and they can see that he is a gentleman, and finally one of them says:

'Yes,' he says, 'we are speaking of a character by the name of Joel Duffle. He is without doubt the greatest eater alive. He just wins a unique wager. He bets a character from Bangor, Me., that he can eat a whole window display of oysters in this very restaurant, and he not only eats all the oysters but he then wishes to wager that he can also eat the shells, but,' he says, 'it seems that the character from Bangor, Me., unfortunately taps out on the first proposition and has nothing with which to bet on the second.'

'Very interesting,' Horsey says. 'Very interesting, if true, but,' he says, 'unless my ears deceive me, I hear one of you state that he is willing to wager ten thousand dollars on this eater of yours against anybody in the United States.'

'Your ears are perfect,' another of the Boston characters says. 'I state it, although,' he says, 'I admit it is a sort of figure of speech. But I state it all right,' he says, 'and never let it be said that a Conway ever pigs it on a betting proposition.'

'Well,' Horsey says, 'I do not have a tenner on me at the moment, but,' he says, 'I have here a thousand dollars to put up as a forfeit that I can produce a character who will outeat your party for ten thousand, and as much more as you care to put up.'

And with this, Horsey outs with a bundle of coarse notes and tosses it on the table, and right away one of the Boston characters, whose name turns out to be Carroll, slaps his hand on the money and says:

'Bet.'

Well, now this is prompt action to be sure, and if there is one thing I admire more than anything else, it is action, and I can see that these are characters of true sporting instincts and I commence wondering where I can raise a few dibs to take a piece of Horsey's proposition, because of course I know that he has nobody in mind to do the eating for his side but Nicely-Nicely Jones.

And knowing Nicely-Nicely Jones, I am prepared to wager all the money I can possibly raise that he can outeat anything that walks on two legs. In fact, I will take a chance on Nicely-Nicely against anything on four legs, except maybe an elephant, and at that he may give the elephant a photo finish.

I do not say that Nicely-Nicely is the greatest eater in all history, but what I do say is he belongs up there as a contender. In fact, Professor D, who is a professor in a college out West before he turns to playing the horses for a livelihood, and who makes a study of history in his time, says he will not be surprised but what Nicely-Nicely figures one-two.

Professor D says we must always remember that Nicely-Nicely eats under the handicaps of modern civilization, which require that an eater use a knife and fork, or anyway a knife, while in the old days eating with the hands was a popular custom and much faster. Professor D says he has no doubt that under the old rules Nicely-Nicely will hang up a record that will endure through the ages, but of course maybe Professor D overlays Nicely-Nicely somewhat.

Well, now that the match is agreed upon, naturally Horsey and the Boston characters begin discussing where it is to take place, and one of the Boston characters suggests a neutral ground, such as New London, Conn., or Providence, R.I., but Horsey holds out for New York, and it seems that Boston characters are always ready to visit New York, so he does not meet with any great opposition on this point.

They all agree on a date four weeks later so as to give the principals plenty of time to get ready, although Horsey and I know that this is really unnecessary as far as Nicely-Nicely is concerned, because one thing about him is he is always in condition to eat.

This Nicely-Nicely Jones is a character who is maybe five feet eight inches tall, and about five feet nine inches wide, and when he is in good shape he will weigh upward of two hundred and eighty-three pounds. He is a horse player by trade, and eating is really just a hobby, but he is undoubtedly a wonderful eater even when he is not hungry.

Well, as soon as Horsey and I return to New York, we hasten to Mindy's restaurant on Broadway and relate the bet Horsey makes in Boston, and right away so many citizens, including Mindy himself, wish to take a piece of the proposition that it is oversubscribed by a large sum in no time.

Then Mindy remarks that he does not see Nicely-Nicely Jones for a month of Sundays, and then everybody present remembers that they do not see Nicely-Nicely around lately, either, and this leads to a discussion of where Nicely-Nicely can be, although up to this moment if nobody sees Nicely-Nicely but once in the next ten years it will be considered sufficient.

Well, Willie the Worrier, who is a bookmaker by trade, is among those present, and he remembers that the last time he looks for Nicely-Nicely hoping to collect a marker of some

years' standing, Nicely-Nicely is living at the Rest Hotel in West Forty-ninth Street, and nothing will do Horsey but I must go with him over to the Rest to make inquiry for Nicely-Nicely, and there we learn that he leaves a forwarding address away up on Morningside Heights in care of somebody by the name of Slocum.

So Horsey calls a short, and away we go to this address, which turns out to be a five-story walk-up apartment, and a card downstairs shows that Slocum lives on the top floor. It takes Horsey and me ten minutes to walk up the five flights as we are by no means accustomed to exercise of this nature, and when we finally reach a door marked Slocum, we are plumb tuckered out, and have to sit down on the top step and rest a while.

Then I ring the bell at this door marked Slocum, and who appears but a tall young Judy with black hair who is without doubt beautiful, but who is so skinny we have to look twice to see her, and when I ask her if she can give me any information about a party named Nicely-Nicely Jones, she says to me like this:

'I guess you mean Quentin,' she says. 'Yes,' she says, 'Quentin is here. Come in, gentlemen.'

So we step into an apartment, and as we do so a thin, sickly looking character gets up out of a chair by the window, and in a weak voice says good evening. It is a good evening, at that, so Horsey and I say good evening right back at him,

very polite, and then we stand there waiting for Nicely-Nicely to appear, when the beautiful skinny young Judy says:

'Well,' she says, 'this is Mr. Quentin Jones.'

Then Horsey and I take another swivel at the thin character, and we can see that it is nobody but Nicely-Nicely, at that, but the way he changes since we last observe him is practically shocking to us both, because he is undoubtedly all shrunk up. In fact, he looks as if he is about half what he is in his prime, and his face is pale and thin, and his eyes are away back in his head, and while we both shake hands with him it is some time before either of us is able to speak. Then Horsey finally says:

'Nicely,' he says, 'can we have a few words with you in private on a very important proposition?'

Well, at this, and before Nicely-Nicely can answer aye, yes, or no, the beautiful skinny young Judy goes out of the room and slams a door behind her, and Nicely-Nicely says:

'My fiancée, Miss Hilda Slocum,' he says. 'She is a wonderful character. We are to be married as soon as I lose twenty pounds more. It will take a couple of weeks longer,' he says.

'My goodness gracious, Nicely,' Horsey says. 'What do you mean lose twenty pounds more? You are practically emaciated now. Are you just out of a sick bed, or what?'

'Why,' Nicely-Nicely says, 'certainly I am not out of a sick bed. I am never healthier in my life. I am on a diet. I lose eighty-three pounds in two months, and am now down to two hundred. I feel great,' he says. 'It is all because of my fiancée, Miss Hilda Slocum. She rescues me from gluttony and obesity, or anyway,' Nicely-Nicely says, 'this is what Miss Hilda Slocum calls it. My, I feel good. I love Miss Hilda Slocum very much,' Nicely-Nicely says. 'It is a case of love at first sight on both sides the day we meet in the subway. I am wedged in one of the turnstile gates, and she kindly pushes on me from behind until I wiggle through. I can see she has a kind heart, so I date her up for a movie that night and propose to her while the newsreel is on. But,' Nicely-Nicely says, 'Hilda tells me at once that she will never marry a fat slob. She says I must put myself in her hands and she will reduce me by scientific methods and then she will become my ever-loving wife, but not before.

'So,' Nicely-Nicely says, 'I come to live here with Miss Hilda Slocum and her mother, so she can supervise my diet. Her mother is thinner than Hilda. And I surely feel great,' Nicely-Nicely says. 'Look,' he says.

And with this, he pulls out the waistband of his pants, and shows enough spare space to hide War Admiral in, but the effort seems to be a strain on him, and he has to sit down in his chair again.

'My goodness gracious,' Horsey says. 'What do you eat, Nicely?'

'Well,' Nicely-Nicely says, 'I eat anything that does not contain starch, but,' he says, 'of course everything worth eating contains starch, so I really do not eat much of anything whatever. My fiancée, Miss Hilda Slocum, arranges my diet. She is an expert dietician and runs a widely known department in a diet magazine by the name of *Let's Keep House*.'

Then Horsey tells Nicely-Nicely of how he is matched to eat against this Joel Duffle, of Boston, for a nice side bet, and how he has a forfeit of a thousand dollars already posted for appearance, and how many of Nicely-Nicely's admirers along Broadway are looking to win themselves out of all their troubles by betting on him, and at first Nicely-Nicely listens with great interest, and his eyes are shining like six bits, but then he becomes very sad, and says:

'It is no use, gentlemen,' he says. 'My fiancée, Miss Hilda Slocum, will never hear of me going off my diet even for a little while. Only yesterday I try to talk her into letting me have a little pumpernickel instead of toasted whole wheat bread, and she says if I even think of such a thing again, she will break our engagement. Horsey,' he says, 'do you ever eat toasted whole wheat bread for a month hand running? Toasted?' he says.

'No,' Horsey says. 'What I eat is nice, white French bread, and corn muffins, and hot biscuits with gravy on them.'

'Stop,' Nicely-Nicely says. 'You are eating yourself into an early grave, and, furthermore,' he says, 'you are breaking my

heart. But,' he says, 'the more I think of my following depending on me in this emergency, the sadder it makes me feel to think I am unable to oblige them. However,' he says, 'let us call Miss Hilda Slocum in on an outside chance and see what her reactions to your proposition are.'

So we call Miss Hilda Slocum in, and Horsey explains our predicament in putting so much faith in Nicely-Nicely only to find him dieting, and Miss Hilda Slocum's reactions are to order Horsey and me out of the joint with instructions never to darken her door again, and when we are a block away we can still hear her voice speaking very firmly to Nicely-Nicely.

Well, personally, I figure this ends the matter, for I can see that Miss Hilda Slocum is a most determined character, indeed, and the chances are it does end it, at that, if Horsey does not happen to get a wonderful break.

He is at Belmont Park one afternoon, and he has a real good thing in a jump race, and when a brisk young character in a hard straw hat and eyeglasses comes along and asks him what he likes, Horsey mentions this good thing, figuring he will move himself in for a few dibs if the good thing connects.

Well, it connects all right, and the brisk young character is very grateful to Horsey for his information, and is giving him plenty of much-obliges, and nothing else, and Horsey is about to mention that they do not accept much-obliges at his hotel, when the brisk young character mentions that he is

nobody but Mr. McBurgle and that he is the editor of the *Let's Keep House* magazine, and for Horsey to drop in and see him any time he is around his way.

Naturally, Horsey remembers what Nicely-Nicely says about Miss Hilda Slocum working for this *Let's Keep House* magazine, and he relates the story of the eating contest to Mr. McBurgle and asks him if he will kindly use his influence with Miss Hilda Slocum to get her to release Nicely-Nicely from his diet long enough for the contest. Then Horsey gives Mr. McBurgle a tip on another winner, and Mr. McBurgle must use plenty of influence on Miss Hilda Slocum at once, as the next day she calls Horsey up at his hotel before he is out of bed, and speaks to him as follows:

'Of course,' Miss Hilda Slocum says, 'I will never change my attitude about Quentin, but,' she says, 'I can appreciate that he feels very bad about you gentlemen relying on him and having to disappoint you. He feels that he lets you down, which is by no means true, but it weighs upon his mind. It is interfering with his diet.

'Now,' Miss Hilda Slocum says, 'I do not approve of your contest, because,' she says, 'it is placing a premium on gluttony, but I have a friend by the name of Miss Violette Shumberger who may answer your purpose. She is my dearest friend from childhood, but it is only because I love her dearly that this friendship endures. She is extremely fond of eating,' Miss Hilda Slocum says. 'In spite of my pleadings, and my warnings, and my own example, she persists in food.

It is disgusting to me but I finally learn that it is no use arguing with her.

'She remains my dearest friend,' Miss Hilda Slocum says, 'though she continues her practice of eating, and I am informed that she is phenomenal in this respect. In fact,' she says, Nicely-Nicely tells me to say to you that if Miss Violette Shumberger can perform the eating exploits I relate to him from hearsay she is a lily. Good-bye,' Miss Hilda Slocum says. 'You cannot have Nicely-Nicely.'

Well, nobody cares much about this idea of a stand-in for Nicely-Nicely in such a situation, and especially a Judy that no one ever hears of before, and many citizens are in favour of pulling out of the contest altogether. But Horsey has his thousand-dollar forfeit to think of, and as no one can suggest anyone else, he finally arranges a personal meet with the Judy suggested by Miss Hilda Slocum.

He comes into Mindy's one evening with a female character who is so fat it is necessary to push three tables together to give her room for her lap, and it seems that this character is Miss Violette Shumberger. She weighs maybe two hundred and fifty pounds, but she is by no means an old Judy, and by no means bad-looking. She has a face the size of a town clock and enough chins for a fire escape, but she has a nice smile and pretty teeth, and a laugh that is so hearty it knocks the whipped cream off an order of strawberry shortcake on a table fifty feet away and arouses the indignation of a customer by the name of Goldstein who is about to consume same.

Well, Horsey's idea in bringing her into Mindy's is to get some kind of line on her eating form, and she is clocked by many experts when she starts putting on the hot meat, and it is agreed by one and all that she is by no means a selling-plater. In fact, by the time she gets through, even Mindy admits she has plenty of class, and the upshot of it all is Miss Violette Shumberger is chosen to eat against Joel Duffle.

Maybe you hear something of this great eating contest that comes off in New York one night in the early summer of 1937. Of course eating contests are by no means anything new, and in fact they are quite an old-fashioned pastime in some sections of this country, such as the South and East, but this is the first big public contest of the kind in years, and it creates no little comment along Broadway.

In fact, there is some mention of it in the blats, and it is not a frivolous proposition in any respect, and more dough is wagered on it than any other eating contest in history, with Joel Duffle a 6 to 5 favourite over Miss Violette Shumberger all the way through.

This Joel Duffle comes to New York several days before the contest with the character by the name of Conway, and requests a meet with Miss Violette Shumberger to agree on the final details and who shows up with Miss Violette Shumberger as her coach and adviser but Nicely-Nicely Jones. He is even thinner and more peaked-looking than when Horsey and I see him last, but he says he feels great, and that he is within six pounds of his marriage to Miss Hilda Slocum.

Well, it seems that his presence is really due to Miss Hilda Slocum herself, because she says that after getting her dearest friend Miss Violette Shumberger into this jackpot, it is only fair to do all she can to help her win it, and the only way she can think of is to let Nicely-Nicely give Violette the benefit of his experience and advice.

But afterward we learn that what really happens is that this editor, Mr. McBurgle, gets greatly interested in the contest, and when he discovers that in spite of his influence, Miss Hilda Slocum declines to permit Nicely-Nicely to personally compete, but puts in a pinch eater, he is quite indignant and insists on her letting Nicely-Nicely school Violette.

Furthermore we afterward learn that when Nicely-Nicely returns to the apartment on Morningside Heights after giving Violette a lesson, Miss Hilda Slocum always smells his breath to see if he indulges in any food during his absence.

Well, this Joel Duffle is a tall character with stooped shoulders, and a sad expression, and he does not look as if he can eat his way out of a tea shoppe, but as soon as he commences to discuss the details of the contest, anybody can see that he knows what time it is in situations such as this. In fact, Nicely-Nicely says he can tell at once from the way Joel Duffle talks that he is a dangerous opponent, and he says while Miss Violette Shumberger impresses him as an improving eater, he is only sorry she does not have more seasoning.

This Joel Duffle suggests that the contest consist of twelve courses of strictly American food, each side to be allowed to pick six dishes, doing the picking in rotation, and specifying the weight and quantity of the course selected to any amount the contestant making the pick desires, and each course is to be divided for eating exactly in half, and after Miss Violette Shumberger and Nicely-Nicely whisper together a while, they say the terms are quite satisfactory.

Then Horsey tosses a coin for the first pick, and Joel Duffle says heads, and it is heads, and he chooses, as the first course, two quarts of ripe olives, twelve bunches of celery, and four pounds of shelled nuts, all this to be split fifty-fifty between them. Miss Violette Shumberger names twelve dozen cherry-stone clams as the second course, and Joel Duffle says two gallons of Philadelphia pepper-pot soup as the third.

Well, Miss Violette Shumberger and Nicely-Nicely whisper together again, and Violette puts in two five-pound striped bass, the heads and tails not to count in the eating, and Joel Duffle names a twenty-two pound roast turkey. Each vegetable is rated as one course, and Miss Violette Shumberger asks for twelve pounds of mashed potatoes with brown gravy. Joel Duffle says two dozen ears of corn on the cob, and Violette replies with two quarts of lima beans. Joel Duffle calls for twelve bunches of asparagus cooked in butter, and Violette mentions ten pounds of stewed new peas.

This gets them down to the salad, and it is Joel Duffle's play, so he says six pounds of mixed green salad with

vinegar and oil dressing, and now Miss Violette Shumberger has the final selection, which is the dessert. She says it is a pumpkin pie, two feet across, and not less than three inches deep.

It is agreed that they must eat with knife, fork or spoon, but speed is not to count, and there is to be no time limit, except they cannot pause more than two consecutive minutes at any stage, except in case of hiccoughs. They can drink anything, and as much as they please, but liquids are not to count in the scoring. The decision is to be strictly on the amount of food consumed, and the judges are to take account of anything left on the plates after a course, but not of loose chewings on bosom or vest up to an ounce. The losing side is to pay for the food, and in case of a tie they are to eat it off immediately on ham and eggs only.

Well, the scene of this contest is the second-floor dining-room of Mindy's restaurant, which is closed to the general public for the occasion, and only parties immediately concerned in the contest are admitted. The contestants are seated on either side of a big table in the centre of the room, and each contestant has three waiters.

No talking and no rooting from the spectators is permitted, but of course in any eating contest the principals may speak to each other if they wish, though smart eaters never wish to do this, as talking only wastes energy, and about all they ever say to each other is please pass the mustard.

About fifty characters from Boston are present to witness the contest, and the same number of citizens of New York are admitted, and among them is this editor, Mr. McBurgle, and he is around asking Horsey if he thinks Miss Violette Shumberger is as good a thing as the jumper at the race track.

Nicely-Nicely arrives on the scene quite early, and his appearance is really most distressing to his old friends and admirers, as by this time he is shy so much weight that he is a pitiful scene, to be sure, but he tells Horsey and me that he thinks Miss Violette Shumberger has a good chance.

'Of course,' he says, 'she is green. She does not know how to pace herself in competition. But,' he says, 'she has a wonderful style. I love to watch her eat. She likes the same things I do in the days when I am eating. She is a wonderful character, too. Do you ever notice her smile?' Nicely-Nicely says.

'But,' he says, 'she is the dearest friend of my fiancée, Miss Hilda Slocum, so let us not speak of this. I try to get Hilda to come to see the contest, but she says it is repulsive. Well, anyway,' Nicely-Nicely says, 'I manage to borrow a few dibs, and am wagering on Miss Violette Shumberger. By the way,' he says, 'if you happen to think of it, notice her smile.'

Well, Nicely-Nicely takes a chair about ten feet behind Miss Violette Shumberger, which is as close as the judges will allow him, and he is warned by them that no coaching from the corners will be permitted, but of course Nicely-Nicely knows this rule as well as they do, and furthermore by

this time his exertions seem to have left him without any more energy.

There are three judges, and they are all from neutral territory. One of these judges is a party from Baltimore, Md., by the name of Packard, who runs a restaurant, and another is a party from Providence, R.I., by the name of Croppers, who is a sausage manufacturer. The third judge is an old Judy by the name of Mrs. Rhubarb, who comes from Philadelphia, and once keeps an actors' boarding-house, and is considered an excellent judge of eaters.

Well, Mindy is the official starter, and at 8.30 p.m. sharp, when there is still much betting among the spectators, he outs with his watch, and says like this:

'Are you ready, Boston? Are you ready, New York?'

Miss Violette Shumberger and Joel Duffle both nod their heads, and Mindy says commence, and the contest is on, with Joel Duffle getting the jump at once on the celery and olives and nuts.

It is apparent that this Joel Duffle is one of these rough-and-tumble eaters that you can hear quite a distance off, especially on clams and soups. He is also an eyebrow eater, an eater whose eyebrows go up as high as the part in his hair as he eats, and this type of eater is undoubtedly very efficient.

In fact, the way Joel Duffle goes through the groceries down to the turkey causes the Broadway spectators some uneasiness, and they are whispering to each other that they only wish the old Nicely-Nicely is in there. But personally, I like the way Miss Violette Shumberger eats without undue excitement, and with great zest. She cannot keep close to Joel Duffle in the matter of speed in the early stages of the contest, as she seems to enjoy chewing her food, but I observe that as it goes along she pulls up on him, and I figure this is not because she is stepping up her pace, but because he is slowing down.

When the turkey finally comes on, and is split in two halves right down the middle, Miss Violette Shumberger looks greatly disappointed, and she speaks for the first time as follows:

'Why,' she says, 'where is the stuffing?'

Well, it seems that nobody mentions any stuffing for the turkey to the chef, so he does not make any stuffing, and Miss Violette Shumberger's disappointment is so plain to be seen that the confidence of the Boston characters is somewhat shaken. They can see that a Judy who can pack away as much fodder as Miss Violette Shumberger has to date, and then beef for stuffing, is really quite an eater.

In fact, Joel Duffle looks quite startled when he observes Miss Violette Shumberger's disappointment, and he gazes at her with great respect as she disposes of her share of the turkey, and the mashed potatoes, and one thing and another

in such a manner that she moves up on the pumpkin pie on dead even terms with him. In fact, there is little to choose between them at this point, although the judge from Baltimore is calling the attention of the other judges to a turkey leg that he claims Miss Violette Shumberger does not clean as neatly as Joel Duffle does his, but the other judges dismiss this as a technicality.

Then the waiters bring on the pumpkin pie, and it is without doubt quite a large pie, and in fact it is about the size of a manhole cover, and I can see that Joel Duffle is observing this pie with a strange expression on his face, although to tell the truth I do not care for the expression on Miss Violette Shumberger's face, either.

Well, the pie is cut in two dead centre, and one half is placed before Miss Violette Shumberger and the other half before Joel Duffle, and he does not take more than two bites before I see him loosen his waistband and take a big swig of water, and thinks I to myself, he is now down to a slow walk, and the pie will decide the whole heat, and I am only wishing I am able to wager a little more dough on Miss Violette Shumberger. But about this moment, and before she as much as touches her pie, all of a sudden Violette turns her head and motions to Nicely-Nicely to approach her, and as he approaches, she whispers in his ear.

Now at this, the Boston character by the name of Conway jumps up and claims a foul and several other Boston characters join him in this claim, and so does Joel Duffle, although afterwards even the Boston characters admit that

Joel Duffle is no gentleman to make such a claim against a lady.

Well, there is some confusion over this, and the judges hold a conference, and they rule that there is certainly no foul in the actual eating that they can see, because Miss Violette Shumberger does not touch her pie so far.

But they say that whether it is a foul otherwise all depends on whether Miss Violette Shumberger is requesting advice on the contest from Nicely-Nicely and the judge from Providence, R.I., wishes to know if Nicely-Nicely will kindly relate what passes between him and Violette so they may make a decision.

'Why,' Nicely-Nicely says, 'all she asks me is can I get her another piece of pie when she finishes the one in front of her.'

Now at this, Joel Duffle throws down his knife, and pushes back his plate with all but two bites of his pie left on it, and says to the Boston characters like this:

'Gentlemen,' he says, 'I am licked. I cannot eat another mouthful. You must admit I put up a game battle, but,' he says, 'it is useless for me to go on against this Judy who is asking for more pie before she even starts on what is before her. I am almost dying as it is, and I do not wish to destroy myself in a hopeless effort. Gentlemen,' he says, 'she is not human.'

Well, of course this amounts to throwing in the old napkin and Nicely-Nicely stands up on his chair, and says:

'Three cheers for Miss Violette Shumberger!'

Then Nicely-Nicely gives the first cheer in person, but the effort overtaxes his strength, and he falls off the chair in a faint just as Joel Duffle collapses under the table, and the doctors at the Clinic Hospital are greatly baffled to receive, from the same address at the same time, one patient who is suffering from undernourishment, and another patient who is unconscious from over-eating.

Well, in the meantime, after the excitement subsides, and wagers are settled, we take Miss Violette Shumberger to the main floor in Mindy's for a midnight snack, and when she speaks of her wonderful triumph, she is disposed to give much credit to Nicely-Nicely Jones.

'You see,' Violette says, 'what I really whisper to him is that I am a goner. I whisper to him that I cannot possibly take one bite of the pie if my life depends on it, and if he has any bets down to try and hedge them off as quickly as possible.

'I fear,' she says, 'that Nicely-Nicely will be greatly disappointed in my showing, but I have a confession to make to him when he gets out of the hospital. I forget about the contest,' Violette says, 'and eat my regular dinner of pig's knuckles and sauerkraut an hour before the contest starts and,' she says, 'I have no doubt this tends to affect my form

somewhat. So,' she says, 'I owe everything to Nicely-Nicely's quick thinking.'

It is several weeks after the great eating contest that I run into Miss Hilda Slocum on Broadway and it seems to me that she looks much better nourished than the last time I see her, and when I mention this she says:

'Yes,' she says, 'I cease dieting. I learn my lesson,' she says. 'I learn that male characters do not appreciate anybody who tries to ward off surplus tissue. What male characters wish is substance. Why,' she says, 'only a week ago my editor, Mr. McBurgle, tells me he will love to take me dancing if only I get something on me for him to take hold of. I am very fond of dancing,' she says.

'But,' I say, 'what of Nicely-Nicely Jones? I do not see him around lately.'

'Why,' Miss Hilda Slocum says, 'do you not hear what this cad does? Why, as soon as he is strong enough to leave the hospital, he elopes with my dearest friend, Miss Violette Shumberger, leaving me a note saying something about two souls with but a single thought. They are down in Florida running a barbecue stand, and,' she says, 'the chances are, eating like seven mules.'

'Miss Slocum,' I say, 'can I interest you in a portion of Mindy's chicken fricassee?'

'With dumplings?' Miss Hilda Slocum says. 'Yes,' she says, 'you can. Afterwards I have a date to go dancing with Mr. McBurgle. I am crazy about dancing,' she says.

A Job for the Macarone

When the last race meeting of the winter season closes in Miami and it is time for one and all to move on to Maryland, I take a swivel at the weather reports one day and I observe that it is still down around freezing in those parts.

So thinks I to myself, I will remain in the sunny southland a while longer and continue enjoying the balmy breezes, and the ocean bathing, and all this and that, until the weather settles up yonder, and also until I acquire a blow stake, for at this time my bank-roll is worn down to a nubbin and, in fact, I do not have enough ready to get myself as far as Jax, even by walking.

Well, while waiting around Miami, trying to think of some way of making a scratch, I spend my evenings in the Shark Fin Grill, which is a little scatter on Biscayne Boulevard near the docks that is conducted by a friend of mine by the name of Chesty Charles.

He is called by this name because he has a chest like a tub and he walks with it stuck out in front of him, and the reason Charles keeps his chest out is because if he pulls it in, his stomach will take its place, only farther down, and Charles does not wish his stomach to show in this manner, as he likes to think he has a nice shape.

At the time I am speaking of, Chesty Charles is not as young as he used to be, and he wishes to go along very quiet and avoiding undue excitement, but anybody can see that he is such a character as observes a few things in his time. In fact, anybody can see that he is such a character as is around and about no little and quite some before he settles down to conducting the Shark Fin Grill.

The reason Charles calls his place the Shark Fin Grill is because it sounds nice, although, of course, Charles does not really grill anything there, and, personally, I think the name is somewhat confusing to strangers.

In fact, one night a character with a beard, from Rumson, New Jersey, comes in and orders a grilled porterhouse; and when he learns he cannot get same, he lets out a chirp that Charles has no right to call his place a grill when he does not grill anything and claims that Charles is obtaining money under false pretences.

It finally becomes necessary for Charles to tap him on the pimple with a beer mallet, and afterward the constables come around, saying what is going on here, and what do you mean by tapping people with beer mallets, and the only way

Charles can wiggle out of it is by stating that the character with the beard claims that Mae West has no sex appeal. So the constables go away saying Charles does quite right and one of them has half a mind to tap the character himself with something.

Well, anyway, one night I am in the Shark Fin Grill playing rummy with Charles and there is nobody else whatever in the joint, because, by this time, the quiet season is on in Miami and Charles's business thins out more than somewhat; and just as I beat Charles a pretty good score, who comes in but two characters in sport shirts, and one of them has that thing in his hand and he says to us like this:

'Reach,' he says. 'This is a stick-up. No beefs, now,' he says.

Well, Chesty Charles and me raise our hands as high as possible, and, in fact, I am only sorry I cannot raise mine higher than possible, and Chesty Charles says: 'No beefs,' he says. 'But,' he says, 'boys, you are on an awful bust. All you are liable to get around this drum is fleas. If there is any dough here I will be using it myself,' Chesty says.

'Well,' one of the characters says, 'we will have a look at your damper, anyway. Maybe you overlook a few coarse notes here and there.'

So one character keeps that thing pointed at Chesty Charles and me, and the other goes through the cash register, but, just as Charles says, there is nothing in it. Then the character

comes over and gives Charles and me a fanning, but all he finds is eighty cents on Charles, and he seems inclined to be a little vexed at the scarcity of ready between us and he acts as if he is thinking of clouting us around some for our shortage, as these git-'em-up characters will sometimes do if they are vexed, when all of a sudden Charles looks at one of the characters and speaks as follows:

'Why,' Chesty Charles says, 'do my eyes deceive me, or do I behold The Macarone, out of Kansas City?'

'Why, yes,' the character says. 'Why, hello, Chesty,' he says. 'Meet my friend Willie,' he says. 'He is out of Kansas City too. Why, I never expect to find you in such a joint as this, Chesty,' he says. 'Especially a joint where there is so little dough.'

'Well,' Chesty Charles says, 'you ought to drop around when the season is on. Things are livelier then. But,' he says, 'sit down and let's have a talk. I am glad to see you, Mac,' he says.

So they sit down and Chesty Charles puts out a bottle of Scotch and some glasses and we become quite sociable, to be sure, and presently The Macarone is explaining that Willie and him have been over in Havana all winter, working with a pay-off mob out of Indianapolis, Indiana, that has a store there, but that business is rotten, and they are now *en route* north and just stop over in Miami to pick up a few dibs, if possible, for walk-about money.

The Macarone seems to be quite an interesting character in many respects and I can see that he and Charles know each other from several places. The Macarone is maybe around forty and he is tall and black-looking, but the character he calls Willie is younger and by no means gabby, and, in fact, he scarcely has a word to say. We sit there quite a while drinking Scotches and speaking of this and that, and finally Chesty Charles says to The Macarone:

'Mac,' he says, 'come to think of it, I may be able to drop something in your lap, at that. Only last night a character is in here with a right nice proposition, but,' Chesty says, 'it is not in my line, so it does not interest me.'

'Chesty,' The Macarone says, 'any proposition that is not in your line must be a very unusual proposition indeed. Let me hear this one,' he says.

'Well,' Chesty says, 'it is a trifle unusual, but,' he says, 'it seems quite sound, and I only regret that I cannot handle it in person. I am froze in here with this business and I do not feel free to engage in any outside enterprises. The character I refer to,' he says, 'is Mr. Cleeburn T. Box, who lives on a big estate over here on the bay front with his nephew. Mr. Cleeburn T. Box wishes to quit these earthly scenes,' Chesty says. 'He is sick and tired of living. His nerves are shot to pieces. He cannot eat. He is in tough shape.

'But,' Chesty says, 'he finds he does not have the nerve to push himself off. So he wishes to find some good reliable party to push him off, for which service he will pay five

thousand dollars cash money. He will deposit the dough with me,' Chesty says. 'He realizes that I am quite trustworthy. It is a soft touch, Mac,' he says. 'Of course,' he says, 'I am entitled to the usual twenty-five per cent. commission for finding the plant.'

'Well,' The Macarone says, 'this Mr. Box must be quite an eccentric character. But,' he says, 'I can understand his reluctance about pushing himself off. Personally, I will not care to push myself off. However,' he says, 'the proposition seems to have complications. I hear it is against the law in Florida to push people off, even if they wish to be pushed.'

'Well,' Chesty says, 'Mr. Box thinks of this too. His idea is that the party who is to do this service for him will slip into his house over on the bay front some night and push him off while he is asleep, so he will never know what happens to him. You understand, he wishes this matter to be as unexpected and painless as possible. Then,' Chesty says, 'the party can leave that thing with which he does the pushing on the premises and it will look as if Mr. Box does the pushing in person.'

'What about a club?' The Macarone says. 'Or maybe a shiv? That thing makes a lot of racket.'

'Why,' Chesty says, 'how can you make a club or shiv look like anything but something illegal if you use them to push anybody? You need not be afraid of making a racket, because,' he says, 'no one lives within hearing distance of the joint, and Mr. Box will see that all his servants and

everybody else are away from the place every night, once I give him the word the deal is on. He will place the dough at my disposal when he gets this word. Of course he does not wish to know what night it is to happen, but it must be some night soon after the transaction is agreed to.'

'Well,' The Macarone says, 'this is one of the most interesting and unusual propositions ever presented to me. Personally,' he says, 'I do not see why Mr. Box does not get somebody to put something in his tea. Anybody will be glad to do him such a favour.'

'He is afraid of suffering,' Chesty Charles says. 'He is one of the most nervous characters I ever encounter in my life. Look, Mac,' he says, 'this is a job that scarcely requires human intelligence. I have here a diagram that shows the layout of the joint.'

And with this, Chesty Charles outs with a sheet of paper and spreads it out on the table, and begins explaining it to The Macarone with his finger.

'Now,' he says, 'this shows every door and window on the ground floor. Here is a wing of the house. Here is Mr. Cleeburn T. Box's room on the ground floor overlooking the bay. Here is a French window that is never locked,' he says. 'Here is his bed against the wall, not two steps from the window. Why,' Chesty says, 'it is as simple as WPA.'

'Well,' The Macarone says, 'you are dead sure Mr. Box will not mind being pushed? Because, after all, I do not have any

reason to push him on my own account, and I am doing my best at this time to lead a clean life and keep out of unpleasant situations.'

'He will love it,' Chesty says.

So The Macarone finally says he will give the matter his earnest consideration and will let Chesty Charles have his answer in a couple of days. Then we all have some more Scotches, and it is now past closing-time, and The Macarone and Willie take their departure, and I say to Chesty like this:

'Chesty,' I say, 'all this sounds to me like a very strange proposition, and I do not believe anybody in this world is dumb enough to accept same.'

'Well,' Chesty says, 'I always hear The Macarone is the dumbest character in the Middle West. Maybe he will wind up taking in the South too,' he says, and then Chesty laughs and we have another Scotch by ourselves before we leave.

Now, the next afternoon I am over on South Beach, taking a little dip in the ocean, and who do I run into engaged in the same pastime but The Macarone and Willie. There are also numerous other parties along the beach, splashing about in the water in their bathing-suits or stretched out on the sand, and The Macarone speaks of Chesty Charles's proposition like this:

'It sounds all right,' The Macarone says. 'In fact,' he says, 'it sounds so all right that the only thing that bothers me is I

cannot figure out why Chesty does not take it over one hundred per cent. But,' he says, 'I can see Chesty is getting old, and maybe he loses his nerve. Well,' The Macarone says, 'that is the way it always is with old folks. They lose their nerve.'

Then The Macarone starts swimming towards a float pretty well out in the water, and what happens when he is about half-way to the float but he starts flapping around in the water no little, and it is plain to be seen that he is in some difficulty and seems about to drown. In fact, The Macarone issues loud cries for help, but, personally, I do not see where it is any of my put-in to help him, as he is just a chance acquaintance of mine and, furthermore, I cannot swim.

Well, it seems that Willie cannot swim either, and he is saying it is too bad that The Macarone has to go in such a fashion, and he is also saying he better go and get The Macarone's clothes before someone else thinks of it. But about this time a little Judy with about as much bathing-suit on as will make a boxing glove for a mosquito jumps off the float and swims to The Macarone and seizes him by one ear and holds his head above the water until a lifeguard with hair on his chest gets out there and takes The Macarone off her hands.

Well, the lifeguard tows The Macarone ashore and rolls him over a barrel and gets enough water out of him to float the *Queen Mary*, and by and by The Macarone is as good as new, and he starts looking around for the little Judy who holds him up in the water.

'She almost pulls my ear out by the roots,' The Macarone says. 'But,' he says, 'I will forgive this torture because she saves my life. Who is she, and where is she?'

Well, the lifeguard, who turns out to be a character by the name of Dorgan, says she is Miss Mary Peering and that she works in the evening in a barbecue stand over on Fifth Street, and what is more, she is a right nifty little swimmer, but, of course, The Macarone already knows this. But now nothing will do but we must go to the barbecue stand and find Miss Mary Peering, and there she is in a blue linen uniform and with a Southern accent, dealing hot dogs and hamburger sandwiches and one thing and another, to the customers.

She is a pretty little Judy who is maybe nineteen years of age, and when The Macarone steps forward and thanks her for saving his life, she laughs and says it is nothing whatever, and at first The Macarone figures that this crack is by no means complimentary, and is disposed to chide her for same, especially when he gets to thinking about his ear. But he can see that the little Judy has no idea of getting out of line with him, and he becomes very friendly towards her.

We sit there quite a while with The Macarone talking to her between customers, and finally he asks her if she has a sweet-pea anywhere in the background of her career, and at this she bursts into tears and almost drops an order of pork and beans.

'Yes,' she says, 'I am in love with a wonderful young character by the name of Lionel Box. He is a nephew of Mr.

Cleeburn T. Box, and Mr. Cleeburn T. Box is greatly opposed to our friendship. Lionel wishes to marry me, but,' she says, 'Mr. Cleeburn T. Box is his guardian and says he will not hear of Lionel marrying beneath his station. Lionel will be very rich when he is of age, a year from now, and then he can do as he pleases, but just at present his Uncle Cleeburn keeps him from even seeing me. Oh,' she says, 'I am heartbroken.'

'Where is this Lionel now?' The Macarone says.

'That is just it,' Miss Mary Peering says. 'He is home, sick with the grip or some such, and his Uncle Cleeburn will not as much as let him answer the telephone. His Uncle Cleeburn acts awful crazy, if you ask me. But,' she says, 'just wait until Lionel is of age and we can be married. Then we will go so far away from his Uncle Cleeburn he can never catch up with us again.'

Well, at this news The Macarone seems to become very thoughtful, and at first I think it is because he is disappointed to find Miss Mary Peering has a sweet-pea in the background, but after a little more talk, he thanks her again for saving his life and pats her hand and tells her not to worry about nothing, not even about what she does to his ear.

Then we go to the Shark Fin Grill and find Chesty Charles sitting out in front with his chair tilted up against the wall, and The Macarone says to him like this:

'Chesty,' he says, 'have the dough on call for me from now on. I will take care of this matter for Mr. Cleeburn T. Box. I

study it over carefully,' The Macarone says, 'and I can see how I will render Mr. Box a service and at the same time do a new friend of mine a favour.

'In the meantime,' The Macarone says, 'you keep Willie here amused. It is a one-handed job, and I do not care to use him on it in any manner, shape or form. He is a nice character, but,' The Macarone says, 'he sometimes makes wrong moves. He is too handy with that thing to suit me. By the way, Chesty,' he says, 'what does Mr. Cleeburn T. Box look like?'

'Well,' Chesty says, 'he will be the only one you find in the room indicated on the diagram, so his looks do not make any difference, but,' he says, 'he is smooth-shaved and has thick black hair.'

Now, several nights pass away, and every night I drop into the Shark Fin Grill to visit with Chesty Charles, but The Macarone does not show up but once, and this is to personally view the five thousand dollars that Charles now has in his safe, although Willie comes in now and then and sits around a while. But Willie is a most restless character, and he does not seem to be able to hold still more than a few minutes at a time, and he is always wandering around and about the city.

Finally, along towards four bells one morning, when Chesty Charles is getting ready to close the Shark Fin Grill, in walks The Macarone, and it is plain to be seen that he has something on his mind.

A couple of customers are still in the joint and The Macarone waits until they depart, and then he steps over to the bar, where Chesty Charles is working, and gazes at Chesty for quite a spell without saying as much as aye, yes, or no.

'Well?' Chesty says.

'Well, Chesty,' The Macarone says, 'I go to the home of your Mr. Cleeburn T. Box a little while ago. It is a nice place. A little more shrubbery than we like in Kansas City, but still a nice place. It must stand somebody maybe half a million. I follow your diagram, Chesty,' he says. 'I find the wing marked X and I make my way through plenty of cactus and Spanish bayonets, and I do not know what all else, and enter the house by way of an open French window.

'I find myself in a room in which there are no lights, but,' The Macarone says, 'as soon as my eyes become accustomed to the darkness, I can see that is all just as the diagram shows. There is a bed within a few steps of the window and there is a character asleep on the bed. He is snoring pretty good too. In fact,' The Macarone says, 'he is snoring about as good as anybody I ever hear, and I do not bar Willie, who is a wonderful snorer.'

'All right,' Chesty Charles says.

'Show me the dough again, Chesty,' The Macarone says.

So Chesty goes to his safe and opens it and outs with a nice package of the soft and places it on the back bar where The Macarone can see it, and the sight of the money seems to please The Macarone no little.

'All right,' Chesty says. 'Then what?'

'Well, Chesty,' The Macarone says, 'there I am with that thing in my hand, and there is this character on the bed asleep, and there is no sound except his snoring and the wind in some palm-trees outside. Chesty,' he says, 'are you ever in a strange house at night with the wind working on the palm-trees outside?'

'No,' Chesty says. 'I do not care for palm-trees.'

'It is a lonesome sound,' The Macarone says. 'Well,' he says, 'I step over to the bed, and I can see by the outline of the character on the bed that he is sleeping on his back, which is a good thing, as it saves me the trouble of turning him over and maybe waking him up. You see, Chesty,' he says, 'I give this matter some scientific study beforehand. I figure that the right idea in this case is to push this character in such a manner that there can be no doubt that he pushes himself, so it must be done from in front, and from close up.

'Well,' The Macarone says, 'I wait right over this character on the bed until my eyes make out the outline of his face in the dark, and I put that thing down close to his nose, and just as I am about to give it to him, the moon comes out from

behind a cloud over the bay and spills plenty of light through the open French window and over the character on the bed.

'And,' The Macarone says, '*I* observe that this character on the bed is holding some object clasped to his breast, and that he has a large smile on his face, as if he is dreaming very pleasant dreams, indeed; and when I gently remove the object from his fingers, thinking it may be something of value to me, and hold it up to the light, what is it but a framed stand photograph of a young friend of mine by the name of Miss Mary Peering.

'But,' The Macarone says, 'I hope and trust that no one will ever relate to Miss Mary Peering the story of me finding this character asleep with her picture, and snoring, because,' he says, 'snoring is without doubt a great knock to romance.'

'So?' Chesty Charles says.

'So,' The Macarone says, 'I come away as quietly as possible without disturbing the character on the bed, and here I am, Chesty, and there you are, and it comes to my mind that somebody tries to drop me in on a great piece of skullduggery.'

And all of a sudden, The Macarone outs with that thing and jams the nozzle of it into Chesty Charles's chest, and says:

'Hand over that dough, Chesty,' he says. 'A nice thing you are trying to get a respectable character like me into, because you know very well it cannot be your Mr. Cleeburn T. Box

on the bed in that room with Miss Mary Peering's photograph clasped to his breast and smiling so. Chesty,' he says, 'I fear you almost make a criminal of me, and for two cents I will give you a pushing for your own self, right here and now.'

'Why, Mac,' Chesty says, 'you are a trifle hasty. If it is not Mr. Cleeburn T. Box in that bed, I cannot think who it can be, but,' he says, 'maybe some last-minute switch comes up in the occupant of the bed by accident. Maybe it is something Mr. Cleeburn T. Box will easily explain when I see him again. Why,' Chesty says, 'I cannot believe Mr. Cleeburn T. Box means any fraud in this matter. He seems to me to be a nice, honest character, and very sincere in his wish to be pushed.'

Then Chesty Charles goes on to state that if there is any fraud in this matter, he is also a victim of same, and he says he will surely speak harshly to Mr. Cleeburn T. Box about it the first time he gets a chance. In fact, Chesty Charles becomes quite indignant when he gets to thinking that maybe Mr. Cleeburn T. Box may be deceiving him and finally The Macarone says:

'Well, all right,' he says. 'Maybe you are not in on anything, at that, and, in fact, I do not see what it is all about, anyway; but,' he says, 'it is my opinion that your Mr. Cleeburn T. Box is without doubt nothing but a great scalawag somewhere. Anyway, hand over the dough, Chesty,' he says. 'I am going to collect on my good intentions.'

So Chesty Charles takes the package off the back bar and hands it over to The Macarone, and as The Macarone is disposing of it in his pants' pocket, Chesty says to him like this: 'But look, Mac,' he says, 'I am entitled to my twenty-five per cent. for finding the plant, just the same.'

Well, The Macarone seems to be thinking this over, and, personally, I figure there is much justice in what Chesty Charles says, and while The Macarone is thinking, there is a noise at the door of somebody coming in, and The Macarone hides that thing under his coat, though I notice he keeps his hand under there, too, until it turns out that the party coming in is nobody but Willie.

'Well,' Willie says, 'I have quite an interesting experience just now while I am taking a stroll away out on the Boulevard. It is right pretty out that way, to be sure,' he says. 'I meet a cop and get to talking to him about this and that, and while we are talking the cop says, "Good evening, Mr. Box," to a character who goes walking past.

'The cop says this character is Mr. Cleeburn T. Box,' Willie says. 'I say Mr. Box looks worried, and the cop says yes, his nephew is sick, and maybe he is worrying about him. But,' Willie says, 'the cop says, "If I am Mr. Box, I will not be worrying about such a thing, because if the nephew dies before he comes of age, Mr. Box is the sole heir to his brother's estate of maybe ten million dollars, and the nephew is not yet of age."'

'"Well, cop," I say,' Willie says, '"are you sure this is Mr. Cleeburn T. Box?"' and the cop says yes, he knows him for over ten years, and that he meets up with him every night on the Boulevard for the past week, just the same as to-night, because it seems Mr. Cleeburn T. Box takes to strolling that way quite some lately.

'So,' Willie says, 'I figure to save everybody a lot of bother, and I follow Mr. Cleeburn T. Box away out the Boulevard after I leave the cop, and when I get to a spot that seems nice and quiet and with nobody around, I step close enough for powder marks to show good and give it to Mr. Cleeburn T. Box between the eyes. Then,' Willie says, 'I leave that thing in his right hand, and if they do not say it is a clear case of him pushing himself when they find him, I will eat my hat.'

'Willie,' The Macarone says, 'is your Mr. Cleeburn T. Box clean-shaved and does he have thick black hair?'

'Why, no,' Willie says. 'He has a big mouser on his upper lip and no hair whatsoever on his head. In fact,' he says, 'he is as bald as a biscuit, and maybe balder.'

Now, at this The Macarone turns to Chesty Charles, but by the time he is half turned, Chesty is out the back door of the Shark Fin Grill and is taking it on the Jesse Owens up the street, and The Macarone seems greatly surprised and somewhat disappointed, and says to me like this:

'Well,' he says, 'Willie and me cannot wait for Chesty to return, but,' he says, 'you can tell him for me that, under the

circumstances, I am compelled to reject his request for twenty-five per cent. for finding the plant. And,' The Macarone says, 'if ever you hear of the nephew of the late Mr. Cleeburn T. Box beefing about a missing photograph of Miss Mary Peering, you can tell him that it is in good hands.'

All Horse Players Die Broke

It is during the last race meeting at Saratoga, and one evening I am standing out under the elms in front of the Grand Union Hotel thinking what a beautiful world it is, to be sure, for what do I do in the afternoon at the track but grab myself a piece of a 10-to-l shot.

I am thinking what a beautiful moon it is, indeed, that is shining down over the park where Mr. Dick Canfield once deals them higher than a cat's back, and how pure and balmy the air is, and also what nice-looking Judys are wandering around and about, although it is only the night before that I am standing in the same spot wondering where I can borrow a Betsy with which to shoot myself smack-dab through the pimple.

In fact, I go around to see a character I know by the name of Solly something, who owns a Betsy, but it seems he has only one cartridge to his name for this Betsy and he is

thinking some of either using the cartridge to shoot his own self smack-dab through the pimple, or of going out to the race course and shooting an old catfish by the name of Pair of Jacks that plays him false in the fifth race, and therefore Solly is not in a mood to lend his Betsy to anybody else.

So we try to figure out a way we can make one cartridge do for two pimples, and in the meantime Solly outs with a bottle of apple-jack, and after a couple of belts at this bottle we decide that the sensible thing to do is to take the Betsy out and peddle it for whatever we can, and maybe get a taw for the next day.

Well, it happens that we run into an Italian party from Passaic, N.J., by the name of Giuseppe Palladino, who is called Joe for short, and this Joe is in the money very good at the moment, and he is glad to lend us a pound note on the Betsy, because Joe is such a character as never knows when he may need an extra Betsy, and anyway it is the first time in his experience around the race tracks that anybody ever offers him collateral for a loan.

So there Solly and I are with a deuce apiece after we spend the odd dollar for breakfast the next day, and I run my deuce up to a total of twenty-two slugs on the 10-to-l shot in the last heat of the day, and everything is certainly all right with me in every respect.

Well, while I am standing there under the elms, who comes along but a raggedy old Dutchman by the name of Unser Fritz, who is maybe seventy-five years old, come next grass,

and who is following the giddyaps since the battle of Gettysburg, as near as anybody can figure out. In fact, Unser Fritz is quite an institution around the race tracks, and is often written up by the newspaper scribes as a terrible example of what a horse player comes to, although personally I always say that what Unser Fritz comes to is not so tough when you figure that he does not do a tap of work in all these years.

In his day, Unser Fritz is a most successful handicapper, a handicapper being a character who can dope out from the form what horses ought to win the races, and as long as his figures turn out all right, a handicapper is spoken of most respectfully by one and all, although of course when he begins missing out for any length of time as handicappers are bound to do, he is no longer spoken of respectfully, or even as a handicapper. He is spoken of as a bum.

It is a strange thing how a handicapper can go along for years doing everything right, and then all of a sudden he finds himself doing everything wrong, and this is the way it is with Unser Fritz. For a long time his figures on the horse races are considered most remarkable indeed, and as he will bet till the cows come home on his own figures, he generally has plenty of money, and a fiancée by the name of Emerald Em.

She is called Emerald Em because she has a habit of wearing a raft of emeralds in rings, and pins, and bracelets, and one thing and another, which are purchased for her by Unser Fritz to express his love, an emerald being a green

stone that is considered most expressive of love, if it is big enough. It seems that Emerald Em is very fond of emeralds, especially when they are surrounded by large, coarse diamonds.

I hear the old-timers around the race tracks say that when Emerald Em is young, she is a tall, good-looking Judy with yellow hair that is by no means a phony yellow, at that, and with a shape that does not require a bustle such as most Judys always wear in those days.

But then nobody ever hears an old-timer mention any Judy that he remembers from back down the years who is not good-looking, and in fact beautiful. To hear the old-timers tell it, every pancake they ever see when they are young is a double Myrna Loy, though the chances are, figuring in the law of averages, that some of them are bound to be rutabagas, the same as now. Anyway, for years this Emerald Em is known on every race track from coast to coast as Unser Fritz's fiancée, and is considered quite a remarkable scene, what with her emeralds, and not requiring any bustle, and everything else.

Then one day Unser Fritz's figures run plumb out on him, and so does his dough, and so does Emerald Em, and now Unser Fritz is an old pappy guy, and it is years since he is regarded as anything but a crumbo around the race tracks, and nobody remembers much of his story, or cares a cuss about it, for if there is anything that is a drug on the market around the tracks it is the story of a broker.

How he gets from place to place, and how he lives after he gets there, is a very great mystery to one and all, although I hear he often rides in the horsecars with the horses, when some owner or trainer happens to be feeling tender-hearted, or he hitchhikes in automobiles, and sometimes he even walks, for Unser Fritz is still fairly nimble, no matter how old he is.

He always has under his arm a bundle of newspapers that somebody throws away, and every night he sits down and handicaps the horses running the next day according to his own system, but he seldom picks any winners, and even if he does pick any winners, he seldom has anything to bet on them.

Sometimes he promotes a stranger, who does not know he is bad luck to a good hunting dog, to put down a few dibs on one of his picks, and once in a while the pick wins, and Unser Fritz gets a small stake, and sometimes an old-timer who feels sorry for him will slip him something. But whatever Unser Fritz gets hold of, he bets off right away on the next race that comes up, so naturally he never is holding anything very long.

Well, Unser Fritz stands under the elms with me a while, speaking of this and that, and especially of the races, and I am wondering to myself if I will become as dishevelled as Unser Fritz if I keep on following the races, when he gazes at the Grand Union Hotel, and says to me like this:

'It looks nice,' he says. 'It looks cheery-like, with the lights, and all this and that. It brings back memories to me. Emma always lives in this hotel whenever we make Saratoga for the races back in the days when I am in the money. She always has a suite of two or three rooms on this side of the hotel. Once she has four.

'I often stand here under these trees,' Unser Fritz says, watching her windows to see what time she puts out her lights, because, while I trust Emma implicitly, I know she has a restless nature, and sometimes she cannot resist returning to scenes of gaiety after I bid her good night, especially,' he says, 'with a party by the name of Pete Shovelin, who runs the restaurant where she once deals them off the arm.'

'You mean she is a biscuit shooter?' I say.

'A waitress,' Unser Fritz says. 'A good waitress. She comes of a family of farm folks in this very section, although I never know much about them,' he says. 'Shovelin's is a little hole-in-the-wall up the street here somewhere which long since disappears. I go there for my morning java in the old days.

'I will say one thing for Shovelin,' Unser Fritz says, 'he always has good java. Three days after I first clap eyes on Emma, she is wearing her first emerald, and is my fiancée. Then she moves into a suite in the Grand Union. I only wish you can know Emma in those days,' he says. 'She is beautiful. She is a fine character. She is always on the level, and I love her dearly.'

'What do you mean—always on the level?' I say. 'What about this Shovelin party you just mention?'

'Ah,' Unser Fritz says, 'I suppose I am dull company for a squab, what with having to stay in at night to work on my figures, and Emma likes to go around and about. She is a highly nervous type, and extremely restless, and she cannot bear to hold still very long at a time. But,' he says, 'in those days it is not considered proper for a young Judy to go around and about without a chaperon, so she goes with Shovelin for her chaperon. Emma never goes anywhere without a chaperon,' he says.

Well, it seems that early in their courtship, Unser Fritz learns that he can generally quiet her restlessness with emeralds, if they have diamonds on the side. It seems that these stones have a very soothing effect on her, and this is why he purchases them for her by the bucket.

'Yes,' Unser Fritz says, 'I always think of Emma whenever I am in New York City, and look down Broadway at night with the go lights on.'

But it seems from what Unser Fritz tells me that even with the emeralds her restless spells come on her very bad, and especially when he finds himself running short of ready, and is unable to purchase more emeralds for her at the moment, although Unser Fritz claims this is nothing unusual. In fact, he says anybody with any experience with nervous female characters knows that it becomes very monotonous for them to be around people who are short of ready.

'But,' he says, 'not all of them require soothing with emeralds. Some require pearls,' he says.

Well, it seems that Emma generally takes a trip without Unser Fritz to break the monotony of his running short of ready, but she never takes one of these trips without a chaperon, because she is very careful about her good name, and Unser Fritz's, too. It seems that in those days Judys have to be more careful about such matters than they do now.

He remembers that once when they are in San Francisco she takes a trip through the Yellowstone with Jockey Gus Kloobus as her chaperon, and is gone three weeks and returns much refreshed, especially as she gets back just as Unser Fritz makes a nice score and has a seidel of emeralds waiting for her. He remembers another time she goes to England with a trainer by the name of Blootz as her chaperon and comes home with an English accent that sounds right cute, to find Unser Fritz going like a house afire at Belmont.

'She takes a lot of other trips without me during the time we are engaged,' Unser Fritz says, 'but,' he says, 'I always know Emma will return to me as soon as she hears I am back in the money and can purchase more emeralds for her. In fact,' he says, 'this knowledge is all that keeps me struggling now.'

'Look, Fritz,' I say, 'what do you mean, keeps you going? Do you mean you think Emma may return to you again?'

'Why, sure,' Unser Fritz says. 'Why, certainly, if I get my rushes again. Why not?' he says. 'She knows there will be a pail of emeralds waiting for her. She knows I love her and always will,' he says.

Well, I ask him when he sees Emerald Em last, and he says it is 1908 in the old Waldorf-Astoria the night he blows a hundred and sixty thousand betting on a hide called Sir Martin to win the Futurity, and it is all the dough Unser Fritz has at the moment. In fact, he is cleaner than a jay bird, and he is feeling somewhat discouraged.

It seems he is waiting on his floor for the elevator, and when it comes down Emerald Em is one of the several passengers, and when the door opens, and Unser Fritz starts to get in, she raises her foot and plants it in his stomach, and gives him a big push back out the door and the elevator goes on down without him.

'But, of course,' Unser Fritz says, 'Emma never likes to ride in the same elevator with me, because I am not always tidy enough to suit her in those days, what with having so much work to do on my figures, and she claims it is a knock to her socially. Anyway,' he says, 'this is the last I see of Emma.'

'Why, Fritz,' I say, 'nineteen-eight is nearly thirty years back, and if she ever thinks of returning to you, she will return long before this.'

'No,' Unser Fritz says. 'You see, I never make a scratch since then. I am never since in the money, so there is no

reason for Emma to return to me. But,' he says, 'wait until I get going good again and you will see.'

Well, I always figure Unser Fritz must be more or less of an old screwball for going on thinking there is still a chance for him around the tracks, and now I am sure of it, and I am about to bid him good evening, when he mentions that he can use about two dollars if I happen to have a deuce on me that is not working, and I will say one thing for Unser Fritz, he seldom comes right out and asks anybody for anything unless things are very desperate with him, indeed.

'I need it to pay something on account of my landlady,' he says. 'I room with old Mrs. Crob around the corner for over twenty years, and,' he says, 'she only charges me a finnif a week, so I try to keep from getting too far to the rear with her. I will return it to you the first score I make.'

Well, of course I know this means practically never, but I am feeling so good about my success at the track that I slip him a deucer, and it is half an hour later before I fully realize what I do, and go looking for Fritz to get anyway half of it back. But by this time he disappears, and I think no more of the matter until the next day out at the course when I hear Unser Fritz bets two dollars on a thing by the name of Speed Cart, and it bows down at 50 to 1, so I know Mrs. Crob is still waiting for hers.

Now there is Unser Fritz with one hundred slugs, and this is undoubtedly more money than he enjoys since Hickory Slim is a two-year-old. And from here on the story becomes

very interesting, and in fact remarkable, because up to the moment Speed Cart hits the wire, Unser Fritz is still nothing but a crumbo, and you can say it again, while from now on he is somebody to point out and say can you imagine such a thing happening?

He bets a hundred on a centipede called Marchesa, and down pops Marchesa like a trained pig at 20 to 1. Then old Unser Fritz bets two hundred on a caterpillar by the name of Merry Soul, at 4 to 1, and Merry Soul just laughs his way home. Unser Fritz winds up the day betting two thousand more on something called Sharp Practice, and when Sharp Practice wins by so far it looks as if he is a shoo-in, Fritz finds himself with over twelve thousand slugs, and the way the bookmakers in the betting ring are sobbing is really most distressing to hear.

Well, in a week Unser Fritz is a hundred thousand dollars in front, because the way he sends it in is quite astonishing to behold, although the old-timers tell me it is just the way he sends it when he is younger. He is betting only on horses that he personally figures out, and what happens is that Unser Fritz's figures suddenly come to life again, and he cannot do anything wrong.

He wins so much dough that he even pays off a few old touches, including my two, and he goes so far as to lend Joe Palladino three dollars on the Betsy that Solly and I hock with Joe for the pound note, as it seems that by this time Joe himself is practically on his way to the poorhouse, and while

Unser Fritz has no use whatsoever for a Betsy he cannot bear to see a character such as Joe go to the poorhouse.

But with all the dough Unser Fritz carries in his pockets, and plants in a safe-deposit box in the jug downtown, he looks just the same as ever, because he claims he cannot find time from working on his figures to buy new clothes and dust himself off, and if you tell anybody who does not know who he is that this old crutch is stone rich, the chances are they will call you a liar.

In fact, on a Monday around noon, the clerk in the branch office that a big Fifth Avenue jewellery firm keeps in the lobby of the States Hotel is all ready to yell for the constables when Unser Fritz leans up against the counter and asks to see some jewellery on display in a showcase, as Unser Fritz is by no means the clerk's idea of a customer for jewellery.

I am standing in the lobby of the hotel on the off chance that some fresh money may arrive in the city on the late trains that I may be able to connect up with before the races, when I notice Unser Fritz and observe the agitation of the clerk, and presently I see Unser Fritz waving a fistful of bank notes under the clerk's beak, and the clerk starts setting out the jewellery with surprising speed.

I go over to see what is coming off, and I can see that the jewellery Unser Fritz is looking at consists of a necklace of emeralds and diamonds, with a centrepiece the size of the home plate, and some eardrops, and bracelets, and clips of

same, and as I approach the scene I hear Unser Fritz ask how much for the lot as if he is dickering for a basket of fish.

'One hundred and one thousand dollars, sir,' the clerk says. 'You see, sir, it is a set, and one of the finest things of the kind in the country. We just got it in from our New York store to show a party here, and,' he says, 'she is absolutely crazy about it, but she states she cannot give us a final decision until five o'clock this afternoon. Confidentially, sir,' the clerk says, 'I think the real trouble is financial, and doubt that we will hear from her again. In fact,' he says, 'I am so strongly of this opinion that I am prepared to sell the goods without waiting on her. It is really a bargain at the price,' he says.

'Dear me,' Unser Fritz says to me, 'this is most unfortunate as the sum mentioned is just one thousand dollars more than I possess in all this world. I have twenty thousand on my person, and eighty thousand over in the box in the jug, and not another dime. But,' he says, 'I will be back before five o'clock and take the lot. In fact,' he says, 'I will run in right after the third race and pick it up.'

Well, at this the clerk starts putting the jewellery back in the case, and anybody can see that he figures he is on a lob and that he is sorry he wastes so much time, but Unser Fritz says to me like this:

'Emma is returning to me,' he says.

'Emma who?' I say.

'Why,' Unser Fritz says, 'my Emma. The one I tell you about not long ago. She must hear I am in the money again, and she is returning just as I always say she will.'

'How do you know?' I say. 'Do you hear from her, or what?'

'No,' Unser Fritz says, 'I do not hear from her direct, but Mrs. Crob knows some female relative of Emma's that lives at Ballston Spa a few miles from here, and this relative is in Saratoga this morning to do some shopping, and she tells Mrs. Crob and Mrs. Crob tells me. Emma will be here to-night. I will have these emeralds waiting for her.'

Well, what I always say is that every guy knows his own business best, and if Unser Fritz wishes to toss his dough off on jewellery, it is none of my put-in, so all I remark is that I have no doubt Emma will be very much surprised indeed.

'No,' Unser Fritz says. 'She will be expecting them. She always expects emeralds when she returns to me. I love her,' he says. 'You have no idea how I love her. But let us hasten to the course,' he says. 'Cara Mia is a right good thing in the third, and I will make just one bet to-day to win the thousand I need to buy these emeralds.'

'But, Fritz,' I say, 'you will have nothing left for operating expenses after you invest in the emeralds.'

'I am not worrying about operating expenses now,' Unser Fritz says. 'The way my figures are standing up, I can run a spool of thread into a pair of pants in no time. But I can

scarcely wait to see the expression on Emma's face when she sees her emeralds. I will have to make a fast trip into town after the third to get my dough out of the box in the jug and pick them up,' he says. 'Who knows but what this other party that is interested in the emeralds may make her mind up before five o'clock and pop in there and nail them?'

Well, after we get to the race track, all Unser Fritz does is stand around waiting for the third race. He has his figures on the first two races, and ordinarily he will be betting himself a gob on them, but he says he does not wish to take the slightest chance of cutting down his capital at this time, and winding up short of enough dough to buy the emeralds.

It turns out that both of the horses Unser Fritz's figures make on top in the first and second races bow down, and Unser Fritz will have his thousand if he only bets a couple of hundred on either of them, but Unser Fritz says he is not sorry he does not bet. He says the finishes in both races are very close, and prove that there is an element of risk in these races. And Unser Fritz says he cannot afford to tamper with the element of risk at this time.

He states that there is no element of risk whatever in the third race, and what he states is very true, as everybody realizes that this mare Cara Mia is a stick-out. In fact, she is such a stick-out that it scarcely figures to be a contest. There are three other horses in the race, but it is the opinion of one and all that if the owners of these horses have any sense they will leave them in the barn and save them a lot of unnecessary lather.

The opening price offered by the bookmakers on Cara Mia is 2 to 5, which means that if you wish to wager on Cara Mia to win you will have to put up five dollars to a bookmaker's two dollars, and everybody agrees that this is a reasonable thing to do in this case unless you wish to rob the poor bookmaker.

In fact, this is considered so reasonable that everybody starts running at the bookmakers all at once, and the bookmakers can see if this keeps up they may get knocked off their stools in the betting ring and maybe seriously injured, so they make Cara Mia 1 to 6, and out, as quickly as possible to halt the rush and give them a chance to breathe.

This 1 to 6 means that if you wish to wager on Cara Mia to win, you must wager six of your own dollars to one of the bookmaker's dollars, and means that the bookies are not offering any prices whatsoever on Cara Mia running second or third. You can get almost any price you can think of right quick against any of the other horses winning the race, and place and show prices, too, but asking the bookmakers to lay against Cara Mia running second or third will be something like asking them to bet that Mr. Roosevelt is not President of the United States.

Well, I am expecting Unser Fritz to step in and partake of the 2 to 5 on Cara Mia for all the dough he has on his person the moment it is offered, because he is very high indeed on this mare, and in fact I never see anybody any higher on any horse, and it is a price Unser Fritz will not back off from when he is high on anything.

Moreover, I am pleased to think he will make such a wager, because it will give him plenty over and above the price of the emeralds, and as long as he is bound to purchase the emeralds, I wish to see him have a little surplus, because when anybody has a surplus there is always a chance for me. It is when everybody runs out of surpluses that I am handicapped no little. But instead of stepping in and partaking, Unser Fritz keeps hesitating until the opening price gets away from him, and finally he says to me like this:

'Of course,' he says, 'my figures show Cara Mia cannot possibly lose this race, but,' he says, 'to guard against any possibility whatever of her losing, I will make an absolute cinch of it. I will bet her third.'

'Why, Fritz,' I say, 'I do not think there is anybody in this world outside of an insane asylum who will give you a price on the peek. Furthermore,' I say, 'I am greatly surprised at this sign of weakening on your part on your figures.'

'Well,' Unser Fritz says, 'I cannot afford to take a chance on not having the emeralds for Emma when she arrives. Let us go through the betting ring and see what we can see,' he says.

So we walk through the betting ring, and by this time it seems that many of the books are so loaded with wagers on Cara Mia to win that they will not accept any more under the circumstances, and I figure that Unser Fritz blows the biggest opportunity of his life in not grabbing the opening. The bookmakers who are loaded are now looking even sadder

than somewhat, and this makes them a pitiful spectacle indeed.

Well, one of the saddest-looking is a character by the name of Slow McCool, but he is a character who will usually give you a gamble and he is still taking Cara Mia at 1 to 6, and Unser Fritz walks up to him and whispers in his ear, and what he whispers is he wishes to know if Slow McCool cares to lay him a price on Cara Mia third. But all that happens is that Slow McCool stops looking sad a minute and looks slightly perplexed, and then he shakes his head and goes on looking sad again.

Now Unser Fritz steps up to another sad-looking bookmaker by the name of Pete Phozzler and whispers in his ear, and Pete also shakes his head, and after we leave him I look back and see that Pete is standing up on his stool watching Unser Fritz and still shaking his head.

Well, Unser Fritz approaches maybe a dozen other sad-looking bookmakers, and whispers to them, and all he gets is the old head-shake, but none of them seem to become angry with Unser Fritz, and I always say that this proves that bookmakers are better than some people think, because, personally, I claim they have a right to get angry with Unser Fritz for insulting their intelligence, and trying to defraud them, too, by asking a price on Cara Mia third.

Finally we come to a character by the name of Willie the Worrier, who is called by this name because he is always worrying about something, and what he is generally

worrying about is a short bank roll, or his ever-loving wife, and sometimes both, though mostly it is his wife. Personally, I always figure she is something to worry about, at that, though I do not consider details necessary.

She is a red-headed Judy about half as old as Willie the Worrier, and this alone is enough to start any guy worrying, and what is more she is easily vexed, especially by Willie. In fact, I remember Solly telling me that she is vexed with Willie no longer ago than about 11 a.m. this very day, and gives him a public reprimanding about something or other in the telegraph office downtown when Solly happens to be in there hoping maybe he will receive an answer from a mark in Pittsfield, Mass., that he sends a tip on a horse.

Solly says the last he hears Willie the Worrier's wife say is that she will leave him for good this time, but I just see her over on the clubhouse lawn wearing some right classy-looking garments, so I judge she does not leave him as yet, as the clubhouse lawn is not a place to be waiting for a train.

Well, when Unser Fritz sees that he is in front of Willie's stand, he starts to move on, and I nudge him and motion at Willie, and ask him if he does not notice that Willie is another bookmaker, and Unser Fritz says he notices him all right, but that he does not care to offer him any business because Willie insults him ten years ago. He says Willie calls him a dirty old Dutch bum, and while I am thinking what a wonderful memory Unser Fritz has to remember insults from bookmakers for ten years, Willie the Worrier, sitting on his

stool looking out over the crowd, spots Unser Fritz and yells at him as follows:

'Hello, Dirty Dutch,' he says. 'How is the soap market? What are you looking for around here, Dirty Dutch? Santa Claus?'

Well, at this Unser Fritz pushes his way through the crowd around Willie the Worrier's stand, and gets close to Willie, and says:

'Yes,' he says, 'I am looking for Santa Claus. I am looking for a show price on number two horse, but,' he says, 'I do not expect to get it from the shoemakers who are booking nowadays.'

Now the chances are Willie the Worrier figures Unser Fritz is just trying to get sarcastic with him for the benefit of the crowd around his stand in asking for such a thing as a price on Cara Mia third, and in fact the idea of anybody asking a price third on a horse that some bookmakers will not accept any more wagers on first, or even second, is so humorous that many characters laugh right out loud.

'All right,' Willie the Worrier says. 'No one can ever say he comes to my store looking for a marker on anything and is turned down. I will quote you a show price, Dirty Dutch,' he says. 'You can have 1 to 100.'

This means that Willie the Worrier is asking Unser Fritz for one hundred dollars to the book's one dollar if Unser Fritz

wishes to bet on Cara Mia dropping in there no worse than third, and of course Willie has no idea Unser Fritz or anybody else will ever take such a price, and the chances are if Willie is not sizzling a little at Unser Fritz, he will not offer such a price, because it sounds foolish.

Furthermore, the chances are if Unser Fritz offers Willie a comparatively small bet at this price, such as may enable him to chisel just a couple of hundred out of Willie's book, Willie will find some excuse to wiggle off, but Unser Fritz leans over and says in a low voice to Willie the Worrier:

'A hundred thousand.'

Willie nods his head and turns to a clerk alongside him, and his voice is as low as Unser Fritz's as he says to the clerk:

'A thousand to a hundred thousand, Cara Mia third.'

The clerk's eyes pop open and so does his mouth, but he does not say a word. He just writes something on a pad of paper in his hand, and Unser Fritz offers Willie the Worrier a package of thousand-dollar bills, and says:

'Here is twenty,' he says. 'The rest is in the jug.'

'All right, Dutch,' Willie says, 'I know you have it, although,' he says, 'this is the first crack you give me at it. You are on, Dutch,' he says. 'P.S.,' Willie says, 'the Dirty does not go any more.'

Well, you understand Unser Fritz is betting one hundred thousand dollars against a thousand dollars that Cara Mia will run in the money, and personally I consider this wager a very sound business proposition indeed, and so does everybody else, for all it amounts to is finding a thousand dollars in the street.

There is really nothing that can make Cara Mia run out of the money, the way I look at it, except what happens to her, and what happens is she steps in a hole fifty yards from the finish when she is on top by ten, and breezing, and down she goes all spread out, and of course the other three horses run on past her to the wire, and all this is quite a disaster to many members of the public, including Unser Fritz.

I am standing with him on the rise of the grandstand lawn watching the race, and it is plain to be seen that he is slightly surprised at what happens, and personally, I am practically dumbfounded because, to tell the truth, I take a nibble at the opening price of 2 to 5 on Cara Mia with a total of thirty slugs, which represents all my capital, and I am thinking what a great injustice it is for them to leave holes in the track for horses to step in, when Unser Fritz says like this:

'Well,' he says, 'it is horse racing.'

And this is all he ever says about the matter, and then he walks down to Willie the Worrier, and tells Willie if he will send a clerk with him, he will go to the jug and get the balance of the money that is now due Willie.

'Dutch,' Willie says, 'it will be a pleasure to accompany you to the jug in person.'

As Willie is getting down off his stool, somebody in the crowd who hears of the wager gazes at Unser Fritz, and remarks that he is really a game guy, and Willie says:

'Yes,' he says, 'he is a game guy at that. But,' he says, 'what about me?'

And he takes Unser Fritz by the arm, and they walk away together, and anybody can see that Unser Fritz picks up anyway twenty years or more, and a slight stringhalt, in the last few minutes.

Then it comes on night again in Saratoga, and I am standing out under the elms in front of the Grand Union, thinking that this world is by no means as beautiful as formerly, when I notice a big, fat old Judy with snow-white hair and spectacles standing near me, looking up and down the street. She will weigh a good two hundred pounds, and much of it is around her ankles, but she has a pleasant face, at that, and when she observes me looking at her, she comes over to me, and says:

'I am trying to fix the location of a restaurant where I work many years ago,' she says. 'It is a place called Shovelin's. The last thing my husband tells me is to see if the old building is still here, but,' she says, 'it is so long since I am in Saratoga I cannot get my bearings.'

'Ma'am,' I say, 'is your name Emma by any chance and do they ever call you Emerald Em?'

Well, at this the old Judy laughs, and says:

'Why, yes,' she says. 'That is what they call me when I am young and foolish. But how do you know?' she says. 'I do not remember ever seeing you before in my life.'

'Well,' I say, 'I know a party who once knows you. A party by the name of Unser Fritz.'

'Unser Fritz?' she says. 'Unser Fritz? Oh,' she says, 'I wonder if you mean a crazy Dutchman I run around with many years ago? My gracious,' she says, 'I just barely remember him. He is a great hand for giving me little presents such as emeralds. When I am young I think emeralds are right pretty, but,' she says, 'otherwise I cannot stand them.'

'Then you do not come here to see him?' I say.

'Are you crazy, too?' she says. 'I am on my way to Ballston Spa to see my grandchildren. I live in Macon, Georgia. If ever you are in Macon, Georgia, drop in at Shovelin's restaurant and get some real Southern fried chicken. I am Mrs. Joe Shovelin,' she says. 'By the way,' she says, 'I remember more about that crazy Dutchman. He is a horse player. I always figure he must die long ago and that the chances are he dies broke, too. I remember I hear people say all horse players die broke.'

'Yes,' I say, 'he dies all right, and he dies as you suggest, too,' for it is only an hour before that they find old Unser Fritz in a vacant lot over near the railroad station with the Betsy he gets off Joe Palladino in his hand and a bullet-hole smack-dab through his pimple.

Nobody blames him much for taking this out, and in fact I am standing there thinking long after Emerald Em goes on about her business that it will be a good idea if I follow his example, only I cannot think where I can find another Betsy, when Solly comes along and stands there with me. I ask Solly if he knows anything new.

'No,' Solly says, 'I do not know anything new, except,' he says, 'I heard Willie the Worrier and his ever-loving make up again, and she is not going to leave him after all. I hear Willie takes home a squarer in the shape of a batch of emeralds and diamonds that she orders sent up here when Willie is not looking, and that they are fighting about all day. Well,' Solly says, 'maybe this is love.'

Source:

Damon Runyon on Broadway
Constable 1950

[The end of *Take it Easy* by Damon Runyon]