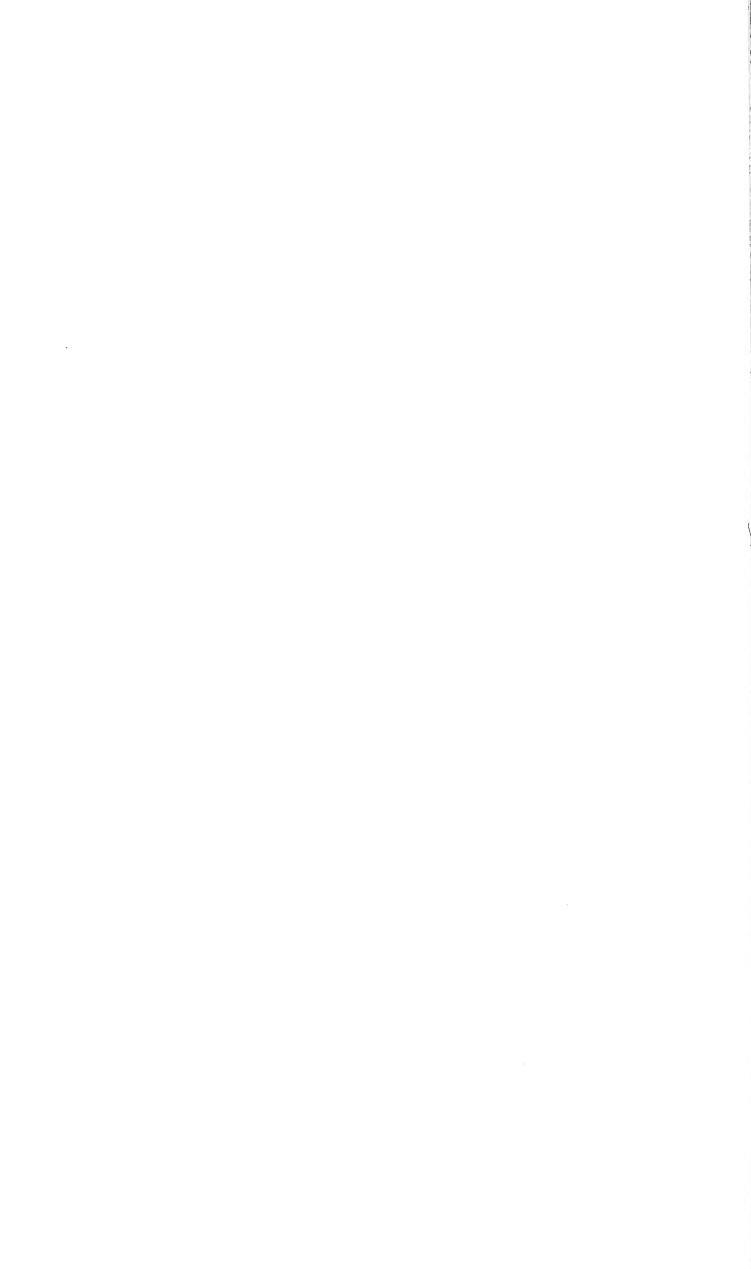
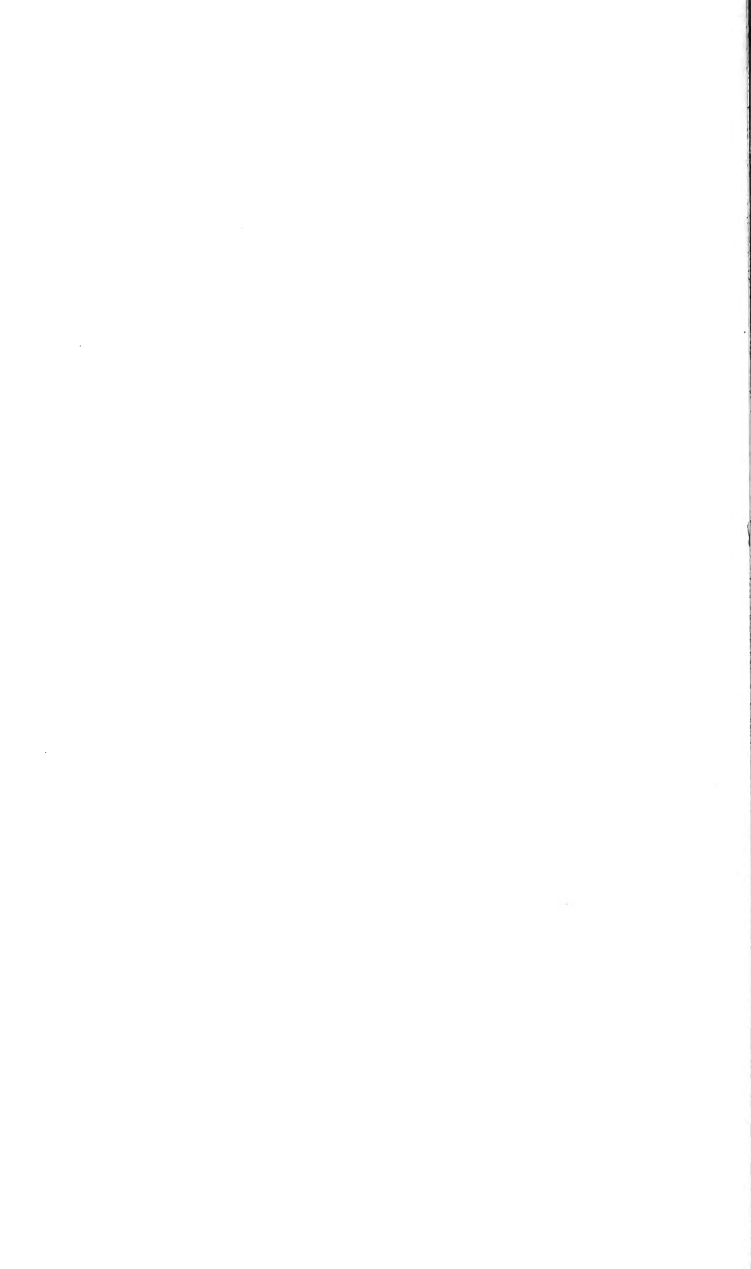




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**SHARPS, FLATS, GAMBLERS
AND RACEHORSES**





Clarence Haulty, Newmarket

PRETTY POLLY

SHARPS, FLATS,
GAMBLERS
AND
RACEHORSES

BY
A. DICK LUCKMAN



ILLUSTRATED

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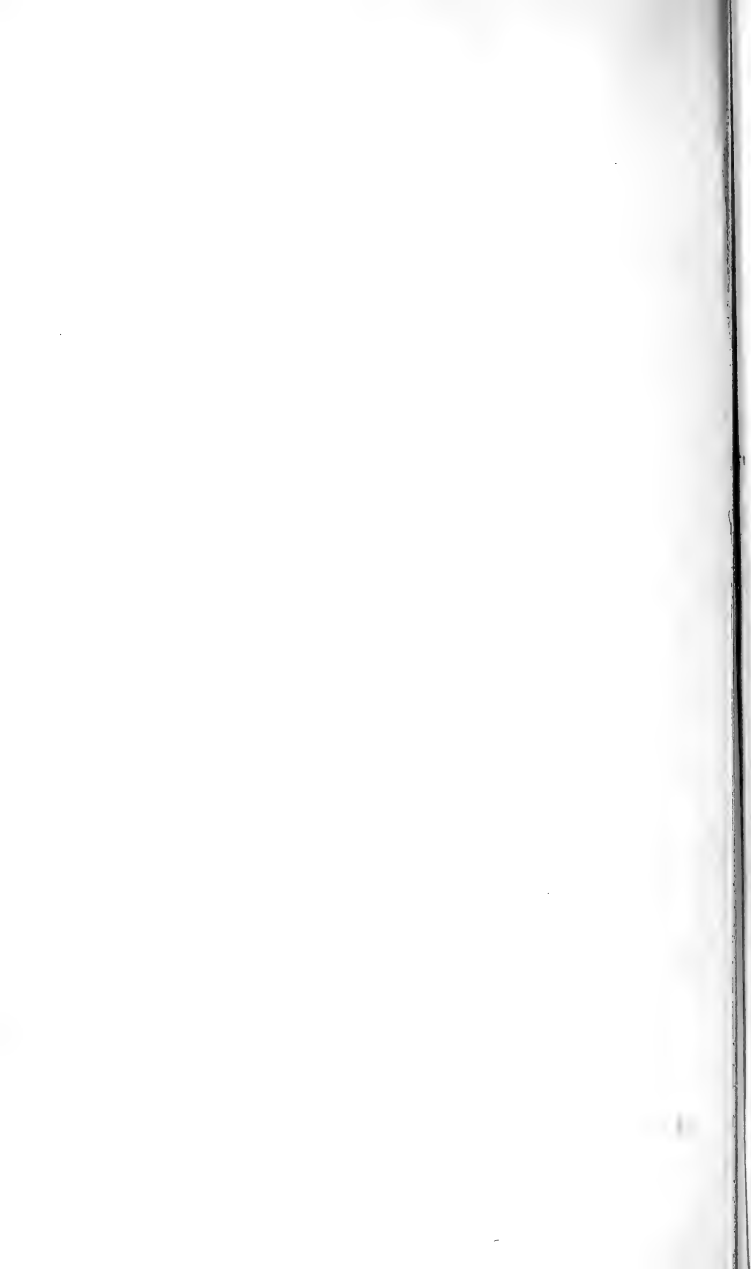
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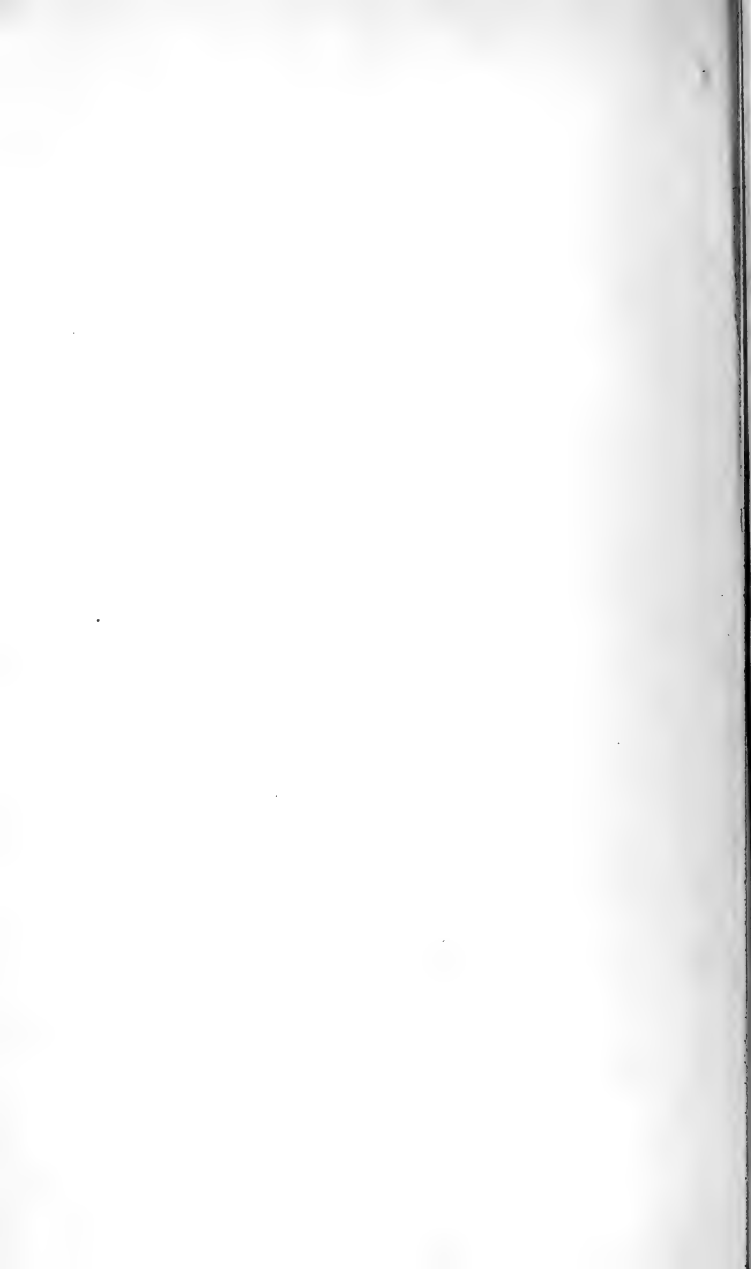
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PART I



CHAPTER I

DEFINING SHARPS AND FLATS

The Ticket snatched—An Easy Mug—The Borrowed Pony—A Real Race-horse—The Lying Bore

THE first bet I ever won on a race-course was a ready-money transaction: I had my ticket snatched and the "lifter" drew the money, of course. That experience at Windsor one afternoon caused no end of inconvenience, for the return half of my railway ticket also disappeared. I saw a boy of my own age part with three of the finest and brightest to a three-card mob in a first-class carriage on the way back to town, so it was inevitable to think that there were such beings as "Sharps and Flats." The fact of the money which should have been drawn caused temporary mental depression, and confiding in one Walter Pallant, now with us no more, the name of an accommodating gentleman who lent money was mentioned, and there were hopes of raising the wind to renew the onslaught on the ring.

Somehow a mutual friend happened to hear of the intentional borrowing of the "pony," and he insidiously suggested that it would strengthen matters if I said that his name would go on the bill; he was doing this to enable me to get the oof. It would have been simply rude not to have taken advantage of his offer, although at the time I was quite certain that the lender believed in *me*; still—such a friend! "Tell your friend to come with you to-morrow morning

DEFINING SHARPS AND FLATS

and you can both sign," said the usurer. By leaving our joint names for twenty-five pounds a cheque was received for twenty-one pounds. We left the office and went towards Old Broad Street for the money.

"Let's go into the post office for pen and ink," said the accommodating pal. "Here, endorse the cheque," he added. "I know the people at the bank, and will slip in and get the money."

What *did* it matter? He was inside the bank a minute or two and came out with a little sugar bag which bankers affect.

"There's ten pounds for you, and I owe you half-a-sovereign," he said. "We split up the twenty guineas; they never would have let you have it without my name. Of course," he went on, "you've asked some of the boys to dinner to-night, and you can do that part of it. Buy a couple of bottles of sparkling Moselle and you can let me know how much I owe you for my share."

Now, I wanted that loan for myself, but he butted in and never attempted to give me that half-sovereign nor to pay half the three pounds which that dinner cost at the Holborn Restaurant—so smart! we thought. My education had begun; two weeks after he moved somewhere, there was another stage in learning that the world is made up of "sharps and flats." There were a few pounds left out of that little loan and I went to a race-meeting and staked half the capital on old Quits in a hunters' flat race, and the bank-roll was trebled. Coming back in the train I had beginners' luck at that absurd game which was played generally thirty years ago, "Nap." It was wonderful: anyone would think the game had been got up for my special benefit. I had to lend them all bar one a little money when we got up through a very

THE BUSMAN'S TIP

heavy fog to London. Even the fog seemed switched on for my benefit, for the longer we played the more I won and—we were an hour late.

There you have it in once : first impressions of sharps, flats, gamblers and race-horses—for Quits was a real race-horse. It was from Alf Saville, who used to be as well known in the " Ring " as Dick Dunn was ; they were contemporaries. Poor Saville ! I see him about now, and wish that he was shouting the odds with as much confidence as he did in those days. Bless my heart, it must be thirty-six or thirty-seven years ago. But they were great times, and the way one used to lay down the law about certain horses which were foreshadowed for big races was most convincing.

Youth lies freely, and a win of two or three pounds was magnified into something great. I used to ride in a small one-horse bus which plied for the humble penny, the minimum in those days, from Highbury Barn to the Cock at Highbury. My father had one of those old houses the gardens of which joined the " Barn " garden, then run by the great Giovanelli as a sort of imitation of Cremorne, and before I was old enough to take or give tips it was the custom to be taken to my bedroom window to see the fireworks and hear the bacchanalian choruses of the students as they marched home, breaking windows *en route*.

On that " penny bus," as we used to call it—the driver managing the old horse and collecting the fares through a little trap-door in the roof—there were box seats, and for a reward of a cigar now and then a certain coachman would be communicative. He used to pour in my ear his opinion about the Lincolnshire Handicap. He had taken thirty-three bob to one three times about Kaleidoscope for the race. I had to swank in dollars, and he placed two bets to this sum for me.

DEFINING SHARPS AND FLATS

That was the first good win—sixteen and a half of the very best ; it was something enormous. A successful investment over a horse ridden by Lord Marcus Beresford at the old Woodside course at Croydon, and this followed up by another bet, made me think there was little to learn concerning racing. But how much we can be taught ! When on occasions we listen to the vapourings of many we know concerning what they have done, and how they have “ did ” it, it makes us sympathetic for those whom they may come in touch with in the domestic relationship. Incidentally it is always such a nuisance to introduce one of these bores with reminiscences of the stupid kind to a man who has forgotten everything there is on both the tough and academic side of it. In the case of the latter being a bookmaker, or a pure and simple unimaginative racing man, there is short shrift given to the amateur (English sense) ; he is either absolutely rude to the prosy acquaintance ; turns him down or ignores him, saying to one in a loud stage whisper : “ Who’s the mug ? ” I daresay you’ve had experiences like I have with a certain type of racing men ; the rest of the world are classified into “ clever ” and “ muggish,” which really, being translated, means sharps and flats.

It is inevitable to feel that the foregoing is to an extent a sort of preface to what shall be a record of a great many years of experiences with every class of men and certain absolutely true statements of those I have met, and the impressions which have been gained in wandering in different parts of the world and finding myself in all sorts of conditions of people dwelling therein.

CHAPTER II

FIRST REAL TOUCH

Sefton's Derby—The Chance Call—Freak Clothes—The Road to Epsom—Pea-shooter and Porter—The Win pouched—Jem Robinson—"Know-Alls"—Those who amused us

THERE was certainly a little time between the earliest experience on a race-course and Sefton's Derby—by the way, the first I ever saw and the winner of which I backed. It was not the first Derby by any means that I had a bet on, for many years before, when at school in Edinburgh, I received a very nice reminder with the tawse that there were other things to think of at school than sending out buying the *Sporting Life* and dropping a few shillings in a Rose Street sporting tobacconist's; that was the usual method. I used to talk quite glibly as to the chances of the horses engaged; in fact, the Derby had been a topic of conversation with my elder brother ever since he showed me a wonderful coloured tie he had bought in the hope that wearing it to the Derby would help Lord Lyon to get home. I know he gave me half-a-crown afterwards.

But I was talking of Sefton's Derby; I was quite young, but having credit at a very smart tailor's I thought my six feet of robust youth could be well garbed in a grey frock-coat suit (eleven guineas a time); at all events, I looked the goods and very affluent when I went to call on a young Australian who had come over with a letter of introduction from my brother in Sydney. It was a very good address, and I had to stay because he would not be in for about

FIRST REAL TOUCH

twenty minutes. In the meantime I waited in the library, and an elderly man came in, who introduced himself to me as the Australian's uncle. It was the day before the Derby. I was wishing to go to Epsom, but it was not altogether convenient, the bank-roll, being at an end-of-the-month stage. However, I must have looked "going strong" as I threw open my frock-coat revealing an expanse of waistcoat and a gold chain—we treasured them in those days.

"Going to the Derby?" asked my host. "You ought to get Claude to take you; I shall tell him to get a hansom, and perhaps you will be his guide."

"Delighted, sir," I replied. "I'll show him the ropes," I added airily.

He came over to me and said impressively: "Do you fancy Sefton?"

"Very much; I think he has a great chance." I may say that I really fancied *Insulaire*—one of Count de Lagrange's—an owner to be feared and revered.

"Well then, I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll lay you thirty-five pounds to five pounds to win, and fourteen pounds to eight pounds for a place." The figures rather bewildered me—fancy putting thirteen pounds on a horse when I only had as many shillings! I hesitated, and naturally.

"A little too much?" he queried. "Well then, only seven pounds to four for a place?"

"Thank you very much," I assented; "that will do excellently."

"You see," he continued, "I have just drawn Sefton in the sweep at the Thatched House"—his club—"and I want to lay a bit off. That will do me admirably; I shall lay Claude seven to four also for a place, and I think you both will win the place bet." At this moment in walked the hopeful nephew. I had never

DRESSING AN AUSTRALIAN

seen such extraordinary clothes as this young Australian wore. He had a top hat which must have belonged to Noah's nephew, a blue frock-coat which did not extend half way to his knees, a fancy waist-coat with little roses and forget-me-nots on it, and a pair of trousers of light shepherd's plaid, which fitted him like tights. He was, indeed, a freak to look at.

"My God!" exclaimed his uncle, "go and put on that blue suit of clothes you had on yesterday. If you want to go about in town clothes get our young friend here to take you to his tailor."

The Australian took it very good-humouredly, and went off to make the required change.

"You be a good fellow," his uncle said to me; "take him off and dress him as if he belonged to the seventies, not to the early fifties; besides, damn it all, neither your father nor I ever dressed like that even in the fifties. And buy him a straw hat this afternoon. Even the servants laugh at him."

The whole of that afternoon and evening the fact that I had backed Sefton to lose nine pounds could not be got out of my head. I bought every edition of the evening papers, and next morning everything was searched to get a little comfort over the bet. Of course there was only one way of going to the Derby in those days if one did not take a real carriage, that was by hansom. Green veils on the tall white hat with the usual little wooden doll stuck in front, and armed with a pea-shooter and a pocket of peas, that was the real sportsman's fit-out for the road, and we set off gaily. Sefton had previously won the City and Suburban, and was ridden in the Derby by Harry Constable. I began to shout him home from the distance, and the result was never in doubt. The handsome Insulaire was

FIRST REAL TOUCH

second, and Fred Archer, on Lord Felmouth's Childeric, was third.

It was a very comfortable sort of feeling that forty-two pounds had been netted. Up to that period it was the largest amount of money I had ever possessed. I was wondering when the uncle would part. It was a cheerful ride home, and the pea-shooter was freely brought into play. It cannot be said that it was an accomplishment, but somehow a good fire had great effect on a red-faced man on the top of an omnibus in front of us, and he longed to throw something more than peas at us in return. But he had his revenge, for as we passed the bus he raised a "vessel" which he had filled with stout and dashed the whole contents into the front of our hansom. My wonderful eleven guineas' worth was done in, but even this failed to depress me. I drove home with my friend after we had dined at Simpson's, and washed some of the stains off. I was just going when "uncle" called us in, opened a bottle of wine, and said: "Oh, I may as well settle with you," and handed me a cheque for twenty-two pounds and twenty pounds in notes. I tell you it was treading on air that night. But the luck of it—just think it over. First the introduction, and then dropping in at the psychological moment and having the "front" to take the bet. It was stupendous, and gave me the confidence to take an off chance on occasions. And to think for a month before I had been broke to the wide! But luck really comes in extraordinary ways many years later

I remember walking along the Strand, going to call on C. B. Fry, in Burleigh Street, about an article he wanted from me about Pretty Polly, I went up Southampton Street by mistake, and met a man I hadn't seen for many months. Not only did he pay me a

A PARALLEL OF LUCK

fiver over a bet, but asked me to Romano's to lunch. Before we began he said: "It is very funny meeting you. Do you think you can get hold of *Sporting Sketches*? If so, I have somebody who will buy it, and you can be editor at your own price. It will only take you a day or two in the week. I was really going to see someone else, but am more pleased that I have met you." Now, there was a bit of luck for you. It was a great regret when the paper, which I conducted for nearly a year, had its title changed to *London Sketches*, and then died. It was bought by the syndicate who at that time ran, and may still run, the Auto-strop razor. Mr W. B. Purefoy, the brains of the Druids Lodge stable, and Mr Charles Mills, the well-known commissioner, were two of them.

In the recital of our comparative triumph over the Derby of 1878, it must not be thought that the path of turf speculation was of the smoothest. There was the usual arrogance inseparable from youth as to the possession of a superior knowledge, and this sometimes was costly. I suppose it was in either 1877 or 1878 that I first made the acquaintance of Jem Robinson, who is so well known in the ring. His brother, Tom, of the present firm of Turner & Robinson—Turner, I suppose, is the second richest man betting in Tattersalls to-day—had won the billiard handicap at the Albert Club. Jem was a very smart young fellow, always immaculately dressed. He had financed a tavern in the city, and we used to go there and play billiards. I suppose in those days it took less to amuse us, for there are happy recollections of regular smoking concerts at the old "Grapes" in Jewin Street. Jem Robinson played the piano very well, and was always in great request. He went as far as composing one or two waltzes. A year or two back, at

FIRST REAL TOUCH

Brighton Races, I reminded him of this fact, and he laughed; it only goes to show that racing may lead us off our real *métier*. Jem Robinson made a book, and one day he said to some of us that he was laying about the Croydon Hurdle Race. Books were open then quite two months in advance on this event. I had glanced down the list of some of the names from the betting in the *Evening Standard*, and one name had attracted my fancy, that of Lord Lincoln. How a name can influence green youth!

"Well, I don't know," was my remark, assuming a wisdom right beyond my years, "but I fancy Lord Lincoln."

"A hundred to seven," said Jem.

Taking a minute, so that I should appear more wise, I replied: "That's a bet"; I hadn't the remotest idea when the race was run, simply knowing that I had a hundred pounds to seven about a horse named Lord Lincoln for a hurdle race they were betting on and run at Croydon. I told another chap who was as big as me. Our united ages were only thirty-five, but we looked half as much again; that's what size will do. We had dinner that night at the old Blanchards in Regent Street and drank success to this wonderful wager. I had no doubt that I should win it; such is the extreme hopefulness of the "lettuce" age.

"When's the race?" said he.

"Oh, pretty soon," I replied. We asked the waiter—waiters have always been knowledgeable about racing—when the Croydon Races were.

And he said: "Next Tuesday, sir." It was not long to wait. On the following Tuesday I recollect buying an afternoon paper and seeing that Lord Lincoln had won the second race of the day; it was the "Croydon Hurdle Race." Surely I must have won my money.

PATRIOTISM OF THE EIGHTIES

An hour afterwards my friend joined me. "You lucky old beggar," he said, "you have won a hundred pounds." Mind you, while I was very much elated, I remembered that I had not seen some of the other notable horses as runners on that day which I had noticed in the betting. But we didn't stop to think that we hadn't won, so there was ample excuse for the watch "going in" in order that there should be a dinner-party of four. Of course my pal was one of them, and the two others were not men—nor boys either! I think we drank sparkling hock, also moselle, in those days. It was nice and palatable and sweet. We loved mock-turtle soup too, duck and sweet omelettes, and no dinner was complete without a bottle of port in the "cradle." It was pleasing to follow a dinner of this kind by seats at a "hall." There we would roar out "Dear Old Pals" or "Johnny's up the Orchard" with the great MacDermott, or follow the insinuating lead of the late Fred Coyne, and wish we could improvise as well as the great Charles Williams. There was another vocalist who was the vogue too, Fred Albert. I recollect two or three years later—during the Russo-Turkish war—he had a song the chorus of which ran as follows:—

"While England has her sons,
Her vessels and her guns,
No one shall her honour defy;
We'll show the Russian Czar,
The sort of men we are,
For we mean to keep our Empire in the East."

We had forgotten the winning event of the day until the obsequious waiter who brought us the drinks (we drank in the auditorium in those days) said to

FIRST REAL TOUCH

me: "Beg pardon, sir, but what's going to win the Croydon Hurdle Race?" I am sure that I turned ghastly. Then he added: "I think Hesper is a cert., although I suppose they'll back Lord Lincoln for a bit after his win in that small race to-day." My intuitions, therefore, were correct: I had not won my money. "When's the race run?" I faltered. "In about three weeks, ain't it?" said he. The waiter's tip Hesper *did* win the Croydon Hurdle Race. This was all learning—and paying.

CHAPTER III

START AT EARNING MONEY

Myself as a Boy—Scottish Education—Getting the First Job myself—
Publishing Business—The Old Argyle and Pavilion

I DON'T know exactly how it was, but my father became a Presbyterian before I was born. He was a Manchester man, son of one of the best-known solicitors in that city, Thomas Luckman, a wonderful pleader and a man calculated to get any man off hanging—such was his reputation. From driving a very flashy carriage and pair for some years and living high, the responsibilities of a family, or something, caused less prosperous days, and his sons had to look after themselves. One of them, my father, came to London in consequence, and married my mother. They were both exactly the same age to the day. From having no religious views to speak of, except that he was nominally a churchman, living in a London suburb engendered some sort of Nonconformist spirit, and my mother, from being a staunch churchwoman and riding to hounds regularly when Sir Thomas Assheton Smith hunted the Tidworth pack, turned round in her views. At all events, the two of them embraced the "U.P. Kirk," and my father collected nearly all the money to build that north London church known as Park Church, Highbury. I can remember those fifty-minute sermons of the Rev. Dr Edmond; he was always known as a great theologian. At the evening service, where the sermon was equally long, I was made to sit by my father and kick

START AT EARNING MONEY

him when he went to sleep, for he would be off in a minute and snore to beat the band.

There was no organ, and the hymns were started by the precentor, who gave the note on a little pipe. The choir would hum to get the kick-off right, then would launch out. The conductor, a man named Russell, was a charming little fellow, with an enormous beard, who for many years held a prominent position in the Hudson Bay Company. It was he who advised my father to give me a Scottish education, and I was sent off to the care of Dr Bryce, who, from being chief classical master at the High School, eventually founded a school in Charlotte Square, Edinburgh. His private house, where he took boarders, was in Moray Place. Really it was an excellent decision, and the most congenial spirits possible were found. With regard to what was learned I held my own, and in the second—and what proved my last—year there there was the satisfaction of piles of whole-bound calf books to take back with me to show that the money had not altogether been wasted. Several things were taught—such as shorthand and précis writing—which came in very useful later when I had to make a start in journalism. There was no copy-book writing, but we had to write quickly with a quill pen. It had to be legible, however, or we had a vicious flick on the ear, and a series of blots meant the tawse—that split-up strap—on the hand.

A few years ago I happened to meet a man at Sandown Park and he said: "Fancy you being a racing man! You were such a swell at Scripture at Bryce's. I remember you taking that special prize. Wonderful! How did you do it?"

At the end of the second year, during the holidays, an uncle of mine told me that things were not going

BOOK-KEEPING AND HUSTLING

very well in my father's business and that I had better get a move on me myself and look for a job. My father put me off by saying he hoped that things would be all right, and that he "must really think of what I should be," but I could see that there was a good deal of worry, so I took my own views about it. I had been hanging about in my brother's office—he was in the wine trade until he went to Australia when I was about seventeen; he lived and died there. He used to let me taste the wine in his office and I developed rather a discriminating palate, and it took very little time to master the mysteries of a day-book and ledger. I had tried my hand at literature, and my stories must have been funny. I used to send them to a cousin I was very much in love with and who was about twelve years older than myself. We carried locks of hair in those days. She was considerate, and used to submit to my calf affection. Bless her, she used to write too, and say how much she had enjoyed the last story I had written, but, from her own experience, the hero usually married someone younger than himself, not a woman twelve years older. However, she praised the literary style, and I believed her, until it was discovered that she had never opened the envelope containing one of them.

I answered one or two advertisements for a job, but was turned down from one in the Hop Exchange for the reason that I was "too old!" and yet I was barely sixteen; but six feet and fifteen stone suggested twenty-one. After that disappointment, coming back over London Bridge I paid a penny at a newspaper shop on the City side of the bridge to look at the *Times*. I read that an old-established publisher wanted someone—which seemed to mean me. I straight away went to interview Mr William Tegg of

START AT EARNING MONEY

Pancras Lane, Cheapside. He was a little man connected with City politics, and conducted the old-fashioned publishing business established by his father. When he had had a good look at me he said: "I think you and I will get on all right together." He smoothed down his grey wig, and taking a pen said: "Make out an invoice," and gave me several items; the result was correct. He called me by my christian name before I had been with him ten minutes, and cried out suddenly: "I think we said fifty pounds a year, didn't we?" "Yes, sir," I replied, my heart thumping at such a splendid start. He went on to tell me that he wanted me to help him during certain hours of the day in arranging little one-shilling books he was bringing out. The first was a collection of epitaphs, the next one of epigrams, and so on. He doubled my salary within six months, and altogether I was with him nearly three years. At that rate of progression I should have had a daily paper when I was twenty-five, been a rich man at thirty-five, and had honours at forty. But there may be a moral in this book how I missed it all. There was the love of distraction which meant good living and also the belief that I was pretty clever at cards and billiards, and above all that ever-increasing interest in racing.

Mr Tegg taught me a great deal; the special work on his little book cultivated the taste for writing and putting things in order, passing proofs, etc., which was part of an education. I had a ready idea of my own about selling what we published, and I can tell you there were some assorted works, from Clarke's "Commentaries on the Bible" in six enormous volumes, Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History," and such like, to ready reckoners and pocket dictionaries. He mixed up leather goods, a lot of which he used to buy from a

UNDER THE WEATHER

German firm, and we had a number of old steel plates, Landseer subjects and others. Later he sent me out to push his wares in England, Scotland and Ireland, and I knew the ropes in all the big cities; this was before I was seventeen. Of course I went to race-meetings occasionally, but I had no teacher, and had to pick up all the knowledge myself. Tegg and I fell out eventually, and the sack followed, but youth can be independent, especially when a twenty-to-one chance to a sovereign has just been brought off.

It is a long time ago, but I shall always look back happily to that little old gentleman, who, despite being crotchety on occasions, was always delightful. He was a renter of Drury Lane and used to give me his card very frequently to get his seat. He lived in Doughty Street I believe to his death, but things did not go well with him in closing years, and the business ceased to exist.

During my compulsory holiday pool was learnt, in addition to pyramids, and the former was played at the old Bay Tree in St Swithin's Lane. A few of us would get very broke sometimes, and then it became a question of combining the silver and the mugs among us having to sit out while the swell player of our little lot would give the money a run. He had to try to turn it into gold, and if luck came our way we would go to old Carrs in the Strand or the old Pavilion or Promenade concerts, and then perhaps finish at the Argyle Rooms. This was supposed to be a terrible place by all the correct people, but it never struck me as being a horrible haunt of vice; in fact, it was intensely amusing. Two M.C.'s used to walk up and down and switch on a few pasty-faced young men to dance with some of the ladies. Few of the real men danced unless their dinner had been a long one.

START AT EARNING MONEY

The late Walter Pallant, who was on the Stock Exchange, was a great friend of mine then, and we went out together on that fateful night when the closing of the Argyle had been ordered. There was an enormous crowd in Piccadilly Circus to protest. "What a shame," said two little girls in blue, who were known at the Argyle as "twenty words a bob" on account of their having retired from the Post Office Telegraph Department and taking on the membership of the "Rooms"—twenty words for a shilling preceded twelve words for sixpence. I shouted with the rest. Walter Pallant, who was with me, shouted, others shouted, the police made a charge. I was one of the first grabbed, and Pallant, trying to get me away, was lugged with me to Vine Street and charged with an attempt to "rescue." It was funny, and yet not funny, for there were little somethings in the cells to keep one awake. That was Saturday night; we couldn't get bail till twelve o'clock the next day. Poor Val Crasweller, who at that time was on the Stock Exchange and afterwards went to Australia—being associated when he came back with Mr Savile in the little Australian horse Ringmaster—gave evidence on our behalf, and we were bound over.



Alfred Ellis & Watery, Baker St., W.

THE LATE WALTER PALLANT

A companion of the author in many youthful adventures



CHAPTER IV

EARLY THEATRICAL EXPERIENCES

Amateur Days—My Contemporaries—Joe Wilson of the Tivoli—Forbes Robertson as a Boy—His Early Rôles—First Notable Success—Herbert Tree's Start—First Parts in *Hamlet*

PALLANT was in great request in those days on account of his playing. It was before he succeeded in laying the foundation of a fortune during the Kaffir boom. He never looked back after that and eventually he became Chairman of the Gaiety Theatre Company and was interested in other theatrical ventures. Pallant was associated in early times with a clever troupe of amateur Christy minstrels. My early efforts were for amateur theatricals, chiefly in shows at the old Assembly Rooms in Stoke Newington. There were several performances got up by Willie Poole, who used to sit in the pew behind us at Highbury in that church I have spoken of. I never gave Poole any credit for histrionic talent, but a little later he asked me to join him in a show he was getting up, and I played Lord Glossmore in *Money*, and for a long time in all his productions appeared in the curtain raiser as Jeremy Diddler in *Raising the Wind*.

We also gave *The Lady of Lyons* and *The Ticket-of-Leave Man*. Joe Wilson, the present manager of the Tivoli, was a splendid Jim Dalton in the latter—an amateur, of course. Charlie Dickinson, who lived in Highbury, was in some of the shows. He was also in the "House," and still is a prominent member. Walter Brammall, also known in Throgmorton Street,

EARLY THEATRICAL EXPERIENCES

was a handsome juvenile lead. Professionals' were always engaged for the ladies' parts. Poole, who is dead now, poor fellow, became a few years afterwards "Howell Poole"—a professional well known in the provinces. The last time I saw him was in a melodrama at a small theatre in Camden Town.

It was a revelation on coming back to England after a long absence, which will be alluded to later, to find how well several of our hopes of earlier days had succeeded on the stage. I refer chiefly to Forbes Robertson and Herbert Tree—both knights now, if you please. I knew them both from very early youth. We lived very close to the Robertsons, in the north of London, and Ian and his brother Norman (Norman Forbes) I used to see every day. I have recollections of swopping a collection of foreign stamps with them for unripe pears which grew in their unkempt garden—a "page" of stamps for six bits of "fruit." Johnstone was at the Charterhouse—then in the City—and he made an impression on me even as a small boy. He would come and watch our games; chiefly cricket, with a tree stump as wicket and a solid india-rubber ball, which Ian used to wield with unerring accuracy. I can remember that Norman—a fine actor I have always thought—was of a softer disposition; perhaps he didn't send that ball in so fast. They were a large family, with Johnston the eldest. There was something so superior about him: I do not say this in the vulgar sense that he was a "superior person," but we boys used to know somehow that we could scarcely hope ever to aspire to that lofty plane of brilliance and intellect which Johnstone would. And yet I have seen Norman play Shylock magnificently when Irving was ill, and Miss Terry would seem to applaud him as she said the lines of Portia. Then he was excellent

FORBES ROBERTSON SENIOR

at the Adelphi in *The Man in the Iron Mask*, and much earlier in small parts with Phelps.

It was curious when conversing with Johnstone once at Manchester to remember those earlier days, when his father and mother would give receptions to their many artistic friends. The father was by accident a business man, connected with Billingsgate through being one of the pioneers of the Aberdeen fish trade. In reality, he was a literary man, as his articles for the *Saturday Review* and all his work for Cassells testified. It was wonderful the way he fitted it all in. In those early days, at the parties, the boys, with their sister Ida—who married the late Val Bromley, the artist—would erect a stage and play an act of either *Hamlet*, *Othello* or *Macbeth*. I can hear Norman and Ian rehearsing now. Miss Adelaide Neilson, one of the most beautiful actresses who ever appeared on the stage, was at her zenith at that time and she encouraged the elder son of the Robertsons. What it must have meant to him—the smile of approbation from a lovely and talented woman! In the artistic sense again it may have been the spur to his already obvious ambition, yet it was intended that art in the way of painting was to be his *métier*, but the stage called him. Ian and Norman went somewhere near Aberdeen to finish their schooling. I am sure that I can never be accused of bad taste in divulging family secrets when I say that, with the very large family which Mr Robertson had to bring up, it was wonderful the way it was accomplished. He maintained a big house, until they removed to Bloomsbury, and then to Bedford Square, where the present head of the family still lives when in London. The first idea I had that Johnston was to be as great as he has since proved was in a play he appeared in at either the Lyceum or the

EARLY THEATRICAL EXPERIENCES

Olympic, I forget which. He was playing in a drama with Miss Genevieve Ward. It was of the period of the Reign of Terror; he played an abbé, and surely there never was a finer performance; but Miss Ward was an actress of such power that she was calculated to inspire a young actor of such talent and imagination. Two of the finest performances which Robertson ever gave in later life were, first, in a play called *For the Crown*, and the other in *The Sacrament of Judas*. In the former Ian Robertson was excellent too. He has been a wonderful man to his brother, saving him all sorts of petty worry through his keen business instinct; and not only that, can give distinction to certain parts. It has been the greatest satisfaction to me that the knighted head of the house has managed to "get there" financially, and that he is now, for an artist, comparatively a rich man. It was left for America to be the first to tender him solid money, but now, of course, English playgoers would throw as much cash in his lap as any man could desire. He can look back with pride on battling to the front despite occasional domestic cares through family responsibilities which might have daunted others. Truly a genius and a man of super-combativeness, but with all that never-failing lack of individuality which perhaps we saw better exemplified in the *Passing of the Third Floor Back* than in any other rôle he ever appeared in, bar Hamlet.

Two days before he first played Hamlet I was in Stone's Bar in Panton Street and Lewis Waller happened to come in. During the talk the production two days hence was mentioned. Waller said: "You will see the greatest Hamlet who ever appeared on any stage. He will be a living, breathing Prince of Denmark. You have imagined such in sleep, but

TREE IN *HAMLET*

have never quite seen it realised." It was an appreciation and a forecast of one of the greatest artistic triumphs ever achieved.

Mention of *Hamlet* reminds me of so many years ago when Herbert Tree appeared as an amateur at the St George's Hall, Langham Place, doubling the parts of Polonius and the First Gravedigger. Frank Cates was the Hamlet and Miss Maud Branscombe—the most photographed beauty of the time—the Ophelia. Miss Branscombe, I suppose, was a professional, as she had figured in one or two small productions prior to this. I found a place among the courtiers close to Walter Pallant. But what a great performance it was! Herbert Beerbohm, then known as Mr Beerbohm Tree, was marvellous. I met Frank Cates afterwards in Australia, where he had made quite a name. He was a good-looking chap and, who knows, had he remained in England and not got into the monotony of Australian professional life might have become great. To the best of my recollection both of these old associates, Tree and Cates, were in the tea trade; Herbert Tree had an office somewhere in Great St Helens. The first time I ever saw him play was in a suburban drawing-room in Stoke Newington, close to Clissold Park. He was in Toole's old farce of *Ici on Parle Français*. He was wonderful, too, in a show called *The First Night*, when he played the French father of a debutante.

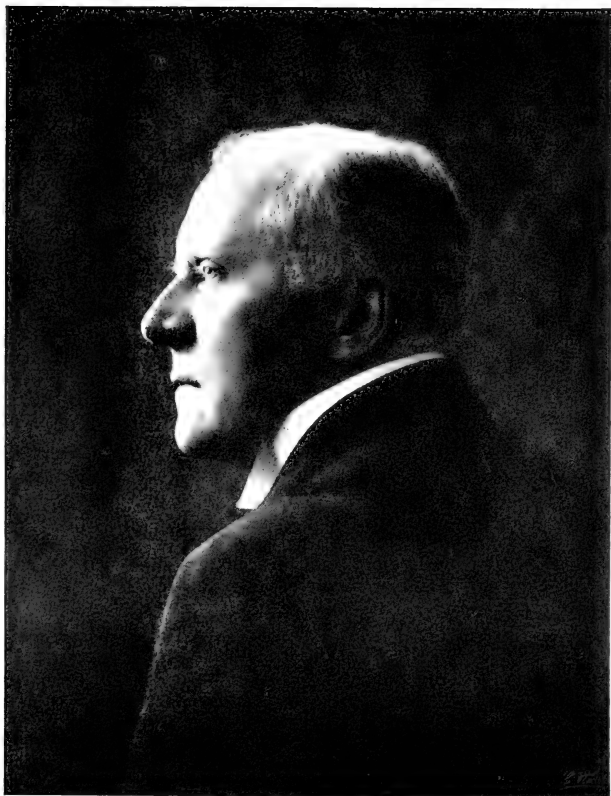
Time has gone on, and I am not writing a life of Tree. When, however, all that early keenness is recalled, and how evening after evening was given up by us all, as amateurs, to a forthcoming show, it is wonderful that any of us escaped going on the stage. Those who left it out might have done well, but I doubt it. Some of us might have cultivated enough art to

EARLY THEATRICAL EXPERIENCES

get placed for, say, four months in the year, which is, I suppose, the average employment of the second or third rank actor, but I prefer—and always have—the “arf pint of porter brought reg’lar,” as Mrs Gamp said. This being paraphrased is that fifty-two weeks’ salary in the year is so useful. “See how So-and-so has left us behind,” said an actor to me one day: “he’s getting forty pounds a week!” He had sixteen weeks’ work that year—I counted the time. That spelt four hundred and eighty pounds; that amount of income would never go far with me.

It is still a wonderful pleasure to talk to Tree. He is such a marvel in the tireless work he will put in. How he can switch off what looks, and is, an enormous success to produce another play, or how he can have a special series of Shakespeare matinées, in which there cannot be much gain, shows how indefatigable he is after art. He convinced us as boys that he was a character actor, and he must always be one. He has always conceived a long way ahead how he will render a new rôle. One evening after a performance of *Oliver Twist* was finished he spoke about *Othello* to me, and of his idea that the Moor should be presented as an Oriental, not a negro. He was right; the subtlety of mind of *Othello* did the convincing on this score. Herbert Tree remembers old friends, and, although not writing a line about him for years, he would tender the best box in the house to me on occasions, with further hospitality in the retiring-room: the treatment of an old acquaintance as if he were a personage is to be esteemed. I like men who never forget.

Not a single name of an actor or actress then appearing on the London stage was unknown to our play-going coterie. We could repeat the cast of all the



SIR HERBERT TREE

As an amateur the author was with him in "Hamlet"

OLD MELODRAMAS

London productions. Miss Adelaide Neilson, who I have mentioned, was at that time the idol of our boyish enthusiasm, and Mrs Rousby tied to the stake in *Joan of Arc* was another spectacle we loved. At the same time we did not leave out the Bancroft shows at the little Prince of Wales Theatre in Tottenham Court Road. Perhaps the plays which impressed themselves most in my mind were the Adelphi productions of Dickens' stories. What a wonderful cast it was for *Nicholas Nickleby*. The late William Terriss was Nicholas; Miss Lydia Foote was Smike; John Clarke, the husband of the beautiful Miss Furtado, was the Squeers; Sam Emery, John Browdie. That sound actor James Fernandez was the Ralph Nickleby, and, if I remember rightly, Miss Hudspeth was Fanny Squeers. More women cried in the stalls and dress circle in those days than would now over the hurrying of the little boys into the coach on the stage in the Saracen's Head scene. John Clarke was fearful in his realism.

The Ticket-of-Leave Man was a great friend of ours. Joe Eldred, G. W. Anson, Charles Harcourt, Robert Soutar, Nellie Farren and, of course, Henry Neville, made up a great cast. When we were undecided, or business was too great at other theatres to get a seat when the doors opened, we could usually find one at the Strand. It was just after the days of Clarke and Rogers, but we loved our triple bill—farce, comedy and burlesque. We had our Edward Terry, Harry Cox, W. H. Vernon, the excellent Marius, Miss Angelina Claude and Miss Lottie Venne. Then in the comedy there was Miss Ada Swanborough and Miss Marion Terry as an *ingénue*. Imagine Lottie Venne at twenty-four! Miss Angelina Claude, I believe, still charms a large social circle in Ireland.

EARLY THEATRICAL EXPERIENCES

At Drury Lane the harlequinade was an elaborate affair, lasting quite an hour in those days. Incidentally this is the part of the show that amuses children even more than the pantomime proper. Why, then, don't they put it half way through the performance and give a good half-hour to it? Even the modern child can still laugh at the red-hot poker, sausages and what not.

Poor Charles Warner! Tom Thorne may recollect one night—I think it was the hundredth performance of *Our Boys*—when Warner had said his third “By Jove!” With a shout a corner of the pit let him have it: “That's the third ‘By Jove!’ Charlie. We don't want any more.” But Warner was a popular idol. It was rather tragic that he and Miss Amy Roselle, both in the original cast of *Our Boys*, should die under such tragic circumstances, the former in New York and the latter in Sydney, N.S.W.

CHAPTER V

EMIGRATING

Jack Harrison's Box Coat—Done at "Find the Lady"—The Late Alf Newman's Advice—The Boys see me off—On the Voyage—Luxuries left behind

SOME months after leaving Mr Tegg I joined the advertising department of Cassell, Petter & Galpin, and had special businesses allotted to me to work up for that department. There were three others, senior to myself, including Crowther, who later started that flourishing business of Mather & Crowther. It was a new line for me, but a certain amount of turnover was effected. Naturally there were many big contracts going, for such publications as the *Quiver*, *Cassell's Family Magazine*, *Little Folks*, etc., had splendid circulations. Of course this was before the time of the hundreds of modern weekly papers and cheap magazines. There was one firm of cocoa manufacturers who had a standing contract for the back page of every new publication of Cassells, and the top quarter of the back page for all future issues. the *Quiver* back page was worth a hundred and sixty pounds a month. It was a useful experience, that advertising department, and the hustling round it just added that extra knowledge which came in so useful afterwards when starting publications of my own.

I suppose it was Fate which ordained that I should leave Cassells, and it was suggested by my father that I should join my brother in Australia. My mother

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had a brother in Sydney, too, a man who had gone out there many years before and had well established himself. London had its attractions, but the spirit of travel had already been aroused and I looked forward with keenness to the long sea journey and seeing a new continent. I daresay my father took into consideration that I might settle down more seriously in another country. He had a great opinion of my capacity to make my way, but he was also quite alive to the fact that quiet suburban evenings could not be to my fancy for six days in the week. He knew a few other things too: that my tastes were absurdly expensive and that sooner or later he might be called upon to pull out more than was desirable. Well, there we were; it was decided that I was to go, and I could see that Willie was not going to have his waistcoats padded with bank-notes; in fact, there were all sorts of little things that I had a mind to take with me; so how to get a bit of stuff together was the main thing.

There was a meeting at Alexandra Park. I had been there once before, on the day that Fred Archer was disqualified for crossing and vowed that he would never ride on the course again. I went with some money sent by a cousin as a parting gift. I had kept enough to get out of hock my pins and links, and buy three pairs of boots, some smart spats, half-a-dozen new scarves, at twelve shillings and sixpence a time—and we knew, I can tell you, how to fold and tie them, and would disdain any half-a-crown or three-and-sixpenny touch in the way of cravats. It was rather a disaster at Alexandra Park; still, there was hope of putting it all right at Croydon the following week. I happened to call in at the Harrisons' in Bow Street the day before this Croydon adventure. I had known all the family very well for a long time; partly through amateur thea-



Alfred Ellis & Watery, 591 Baker St., N. Y.

JACK HARRISON

The perpetual "Eccentric" who was known—so many years ago



DRESSED UP AND—DOWN

tricals, and for a short period old Mrs Harrison allowed me to be a paying guest at her house in Gower Street. Theirs was a most successful business, and very interesting too. Calling in there, as I have said, I found Jack Harrison folding up a very smart box-cloth coat with pearl buttons as big as plates. I was always curious to see any nice things they had, and Jack was then, as now, always willing to be a good fellow. I always got on well with him and, as a friend, he would always take a lot of trouble to see that I had the right thing for any part I played or would lend me at a nominal price a swagger costume for a fancy-dress ball. But about that day before Croydon. I looked at the coat and Jack saw me doing so. "That's your sort," he said, "when you can afford to buy it." "Could I wear it to-morrow?" I asked him. "If I have a good day then it's mine, if not I'll give you half-a-guinea for the loan of it." He agreed, and I tried it on and thought I looked the real goods in it; in fact, I was so affluent-looking that some of my little crowd thought I had come into money. That beastly coat was to cost me dear, and, Jack Harrison, it was your kindness and my vanity which was to bring about my undoing. At all events it was another experience in life, for it was the first time that I had ever tumbled right into the lap of a three-card mob and was done down at the "find the lady" game. It was a glorious day. I had a first-class ticket, and thinking that I had a carriage to myself, opened the paper, and a nice benevolent old gentleman came in, taking his seat opposite me. He had a stock and a big horseshoe pin which I thought contained diamonds. He was settling himself down when suddenly he said: "There's my friend, Mr Johnson," and a serious-looking gentleman in black greeted him, and followed into the carriage. The

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three other seats were occupied the next moment and we started. They got to work very soon after, and I dropped four-fifths of the bit I had started with. I must say that I thought the old gentleman a fellow-sufferer, but what need to tell you men of the world all the details of the absurdity. The venerable old gentleman showed me how easy it was; another having lost his all staked his watch-chain, which had to be undone at the watch end of it from a safety pin. It was this, minus watch, which was the first thing that roused my suspicions, for I thought he could not be affluent. I kept my last sovereign. Finding they only had a few quid trip, for I was the only "can," they kept their manners to the end. They seemed to tumble that I was no good, but were as polite as if I had been the best gilt-edged sucker down from the varsity. That's where they were clever.

It was a curious experience the five-shilling ring, a failure, a determination that it was no good betting. Feeling in my ticket pocket to see if the return half was secure, and the last race was due. There were only three or four runners, and they laid six to one about one of them, I think his name was E.P., but I won't be sure. I went to the bar and changed coppers and sixpences into two half-dollars, for I couldn't take small money like that to any bookmaker, especially in that infernal box coat. Rushing in there was just time to take thirty shillings to five shillings and up it came. A little game of nap with two or three race-course acquaintances transformed this into six or seven of the finest and brightest when we arrived back in London. "Get a bit more towards your outfit," something seemed to murmur, and I bought a dozen pairs of socks, two dozen collars, a couple of mufflers, a pair of pumps, three pipes, and went home

POINTER FOR AN EMIGRANT

to the ancestral suburban dwelling-house with still some ready.

I daresay many may remember the late Alfred Newman. He has been dead some years now. He had a great deal to do in starting the club which eventually became the Eccentric. He had forges for artistic iron-work somewhere near Golden Square. I knew him from a very young man, and his wit and cleverness made him a bright companion. Jack Harrison, too, knew him very well. A few nights before sailing for Australia Newman said to me: "But what's the good of going to Australia unless you have some idea how you are going to make some money when you get there? Look about and embark on something which shall be a novelty." At this moment we were passing Charing Cross Station, where at that time they threw advertisements on to a screen from one side of the courtyard to the other. "Now there you are," pointed out Newman, "there's one thing you might take up," and a mental note was made of it. How I carried it into effect will be stated later in due sequence.

The time went on. Because others of the family had gone in sail, a windjammer was chosen for me, and the cabin selected after a visit to the East India Docks. There was no undue excitement, just a slip down the river one fine morning in the *Ben Voirlich*, a 1450-ton clipper, and a wait for twelve hours at Gravesend, during which time a few of the old brigade in London came down by train to bid the last farewell. I think nearly all of them would have liked to have come too. What they marvelled at was the completeness with which I had managed my outfit and taken everything out of soke: the gold watch and chain, the tie pins, the enamelled gold links, race-glasses. I was

EMIGRATING

even equipped with a microscope and a big magic lantern—the last two treasured possessions of my father.

I may say, parenthetically, he was the pioneer with the late Sir Francis Lycett of working men's clubs; really the germ of that idea led to the foundation of the People's Palace, for which chiefly Walter Besant got his knighthood.

"How much ready have you got with you?" asked Walter Pallant at Gravesend.

"Very little," was the reply; "but here's the wine."

"I didn't mean that," he added, "but I was thinking that a lot of these things could have been better turned into ready in England before you left. You'll get nothing out there on them." Such was the mind at nineteen to twenty.

I can tell you that with a lot of scientific slides for the lantern, and all sorts of extraordinary things in the microscope, I got the reputation on board of being a very studious young man. But I am afraid this was belied on more than one occasion. Emigration was all right in my case, for I was capable of making my living, and had relatives in the country I was going to. But what a farce it was to reckon up the prospects of others on the ship. Some of them had really been shipped off by their families to get rid of them. One or two were in the last stages of consumption, and others were not at all endowed with any attribute for colonial life. It was the same old story with many of them. They landed with a bit of ready and went to the best hotel in the place. Look for work? Not a bit of it. They became "remittance men." Two or three on the ship obviously had been sent because of their capacity to absorb. The captain had instructions about two, and the steward limited the amount of whisky, while he could give them as much bottled



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A GROUP UP THE RIVER

George Edwardes, Walter Pallant, Jack Harrison, Teddie Silverthorne, Fred Leslie, J. C. Williamson, Walter Dickson and others



LUXURIES BARRED

beer as they could pay for. One of the consumptives was dropped over the lee rail in a box one stormy night; he lasted as long as the eggs kept fresh, and he could have half-a-dozen a day. When they were finished—*he* was. Poor devil! he knew he was doomed, and so did the young wife who saw him off.

An interesting personality on board was Major Thursby, a relative of Sir John Thursby. A sea voyage is a wonderful cure of many things, and it was delightful to see the gradual improvement in the tall, retired soldier. He had as private physician, Dr Young, who practised afterwards for many years at Wimbledon. It was wonderful how the classic races of the season were discussed. I made a silver book on the Derby, but had to shell out on arrival in Sydney two months after the race was run. In the case of Major Thursby the plan was to knock him off all those little delights of living in the way of luxuries he had thought indispensable. There had been—in consideration of the long sailing-ship voyage—all sorts of cases of odd luxuries ordered from Fortnum & Mason's. It was drastic treatment to leave all things behind, and whoever was responsible committed a simple outrage. There could have been no possible objection to have a few odd things, but no—that elderly gentleman was left to the ship's diet. We can't all eat what they want us to after a hard life, and why should we be forced to, when the cleverest tacticians in the world can go on hunger striking because prison diet doesn't assimilate to their artistic temperaments? It was wonderful to see Major Thursby land in Sydney. I am a consulting physician for the value of a long sea voyage; if the brain can withstand the petty trials the effect on the body is permanent.

CHAPTER VI

ARRIVAL IN AUSTRALIA

Sydney Exhibition of 1879—What we fed on—My Job with the Exhibits—Pickles and Tombstones—A Married Man

IT was in the glory of an Australian winter morning in August that we were towed up Sydney Harbour. It gave me the most favourable impression. I must have been born on a day when the sunlight was streaming in through an open window, for surely never was a man so influenced by it, and yet the very opposite—sitting up all night by an artificial light with non-artificial people—has been an attraction too. First impressions of an Australian city are not difficult to recall. Macquarie Street was delightful; George Street, Sydney, was interesting, and to see quite well-provided shops; but towards Redfern Station, and in some parts of Pitt Street, there was something suggestive of the Mile End Road in the cheap appearance. But the shop verandahs and the tying-up of horses to iron rings on verandah posts recalled pictures one had seen of real colonial life, and really supplied the little picturesque detail of the streets; it was obvious that I was not in Europe.

The Exhibition building of 1879 was approaching completion. It really was a pity that it was erected in those lovely Government gardens, as it spoilt the view from what is a beautiful spot. Nevertheless, the building was burnt down about three years later and with it disappeared the archives of early days and the records of many ancestors of certain leading families,

OYSTERS AD LIB.

which it was quite right should be destroyed. It was too ridiculous that there should ever be a gibe or jeer against Australian society. In the first place, a little smirch on the honour of the family was only grey, not black; for in the olden days they sent them out there for nothing, and certain families who were supposed to be connected with notorious convicts—"old lags"—had no relations at all with a conviction against them. One forgot that parts of Australia had ever been penal settlements on appreciating the signs of prosperity and the charming manners of the people.

I got used to the way the middle class dressed, but it was a bit startling to see the women and girls garbed so becomingly and the men in some families wear what looked like the worst of reach-me-downs. Wandering about I thought I must have some oysters, so went into Emerson's in King Street. "Give me a dozen oysters," I said. "Well, we're not particular out here to a few," was the reply. "Have a big dish-ful; they only cost you a shilling." So I began and finished a couple of dozen of what I shall always think the best oysters anywhere among the smaller kind.

There seemed two divides—I do not mean social classes exactly—for there were more in this humdrum community than in the great European countries. The two seemed divided between the workers and the racing people; it is so in many countries, yet in Australia—and that is the beauty of it—no one in business seemed afraid of taking an interest in horse-racing. A chap would walk across from a bank and have a pound on a race—he would have got the sack for the same heinous offence in England: I nearly did once—because I went to see Goldseeker win the Jubilee. Everyone could talk horse, and even my religious relatives would discuss the Melbourne Cup. Australia was, and may be now,

ARRIVAL IN AUSTRALIA

a country where the horse is a necessity to all, not an animal which may eventually be only an inmate of the Zoological Gardens.

It took some time to get into those big colonial teas, which should have been called suppers. Of course, many dined in the evening and designated the meal dinner. Others, who had just the same food on the table, with enormous pots of tea, stuck to the old-fashioned term "tea." My word! (Australian exclamation) but to see huge steak puddings, fifteen pounds of ribs of beef, with potatoes and cauliflower, and four or five cups of tea; well, it was enough to give one indigestion without eating. I had to give up the tea or the green vegetables—one or the other—they never did go together. Australian evenings can be very sociable; while not exactly like the surprise parties in America and Canada, we had no need to wait for an invitation, and sitting on a verandah with a tumbler of whisky-and-soda and a pipe, the flying-foxes attacking the fruit-trees, with the late cry of a laughing-jackass from a tree, a perfect star-lit night and a clear atmosphere—it made a man feel good. And those dishes of fruit and cakes, with simple drinks, which seem in abundance about half-past nine, are a part of a very rational life.

The meals in the various midday restaurants were the limit of cheapness; soup, entrée, meat of all kinds and sweets for a shilling at a place of the class of Aaron's Exchange Hotel, enabled, I should think, the small salaried man to do himself well. At the Café Français we used to play dominoes, and I have seen scores of pounds change hands in the hour after lunch, not handed over openly, but chalked up or slipped under the table.

There were some very good billiard players about

EXHIBITS OF SORTS

at that time; the Exchange had two good tables. George Bonnor, the giant Australian cricketer, was a big ungainly boy, all angles. I suppose he would be about seventeen then, but he had already developed a game, and could make big breaks; he was very hot stuff at the game in after years. Incidentally Midwinter, another great cricketer, about whom one was uncertain whether he belonged to Australia or Gloucestershire, was also a fine billiard player. Cricketers and pigeon shots have frequently excelled at billiards.

From noting everything of interest it was realised that something had to be done in the way of making a living, for money was very tight, and from staying in a comfortable house with my uncle the idea was given me that my stay was up. There was nothing else for it but to find a room at one of the innumerable boarding houses. What comfort! they all had decent bathrooms. I had a fiver left out of what I had arrived with. The job came all right. It was to manage a number of exhibits in the coming Exhibition, which had been consigned to a big Sydney firm; it was a task. There was every variety of business represented. I had the whole list of names and particulars given as to which firms had sent a show-case in which to put their exhibit, and others for whom some sort of stand had to be erected. A handy carpenter was put at my disposal and authority to get odds and ends to make stands with. Everything was in a chaotic state, and the opening of the Exhibition due in a fortnight. The marked-out spaces had to be discovered first, and then a hunt made to find the many packing-cases which made up each exhibit. Try to imagine it; there was a big furniture show—a bedroom complete and a dining-room. That was easy, but the bed was taken advantage of once or twice during the time the show

ARRIVAL IN AUSTRALIA

remained open by one or two dead drunks to have a camp in. Then there was Batty's pickles and sauces, jellies and table delicacies—eventually I got them a gold medal. Following on this was a superb show of washing blue; of course the German firm had done the thing well; they must have spent two or three hundred pounds on the show-case alone. Two or three brandy firms, German wines, etc., were simple and interesting, but the Bessbrook Granite Company of Ireland had sent about twenty enormous graveyard monuments: there was one cross about ten feet high. At all events the twenty odd lots were all got into their places.

There were not many interesting people, but Horace Brinsmead was there with his pianos, and used to put on the gloves round at Larry Foley's. He will be remembered by many as a champion light-weight amateur in his day in London. Jim Kellick kept a tobacco shop in King Street that was a great resort of backers. Trickett, the rowing champion, had the big International Hotel in Pitt Street, and used to serve the drinks on occasions, but never touched one himself. We used to go in and see him and hear the story of some of his matches. The Oxford Hotel, at the top of King Street, was a great sporting rendezvous too; we used to talk horse there by the hour, and back the "merry double," which expression was coined by Joe Thompson. Poor Ned Jones used to spend the best part of his day in an hotel at the corner of Pitt Street and King Street and was never frightened of laying prices. I soon got in with the crowd, which were met in various cities afterwards, especially at race times.

Before I had been in the country three months I was married, at St James's Church, at the top of

AUSTRALIANS NOT "COLONIALS"

King Street, Sydney; I was not twenty-one until months afterwards. With that I must suppose that I had become colonised. But how Australians object to be designated "Colonials"!—they exact the real and only definition—"Australians."

CHAPTER VII

IN TASMANIA

Looking for Work—What might happen in real Old Age—Idea for Emigrants—In a Lawyer's Office—Furnishing on the "Never"—Start in Journalism

WITH the closing of the Sydney Exhibition there was a desire to see Tasmania: I had heard so much about it and the moving spirit was on me. I went down to Hobart with about thirty or forty pounds in my pocket, leaving my wife with her people. Hobart struck me right in the face as a beauty spot; the gorgeous harbour is really the estuary of the River Derwent. The climate is ideal, and the whole atmosphere spelt health. I hadn't a packet of money, but was exploiting the place as a grass-bachelor, with a real nice chap I met on the boat, a Frenchman, who had a business in Sydney. I looked about to see what could be done. By the way, my acquaintance, I read afterwards, got seven years for setting fire to his warehouse in Sydney, but there was a grave doubt as to the justice of the conviction. He was so delighted because I knew his native France so well. I looked around me to see what I could possibly do to make a living. I saw greengrocers, bakers, grocers, iron-mongers—I could be neither; besides which, where was the capital? In any case, I never had the obsession to be lowly in trade or anything, although I might come down to sell newspapers I have written for, outside a club I may have belonged to, to those on whom an occasional favour might have been bestowed in former days; we never know. There would be some-

FRENCHMAN'S IDEALS

thing rather fascinating in selling newspapers—there is so much more distinction about it than matches or collar studs and things like that. I consulted the Frenchman I have just spoken about, but when he knew I had no capital he shrugged his shoulders, so there was no inspiration from him. “How I wish,” he said, “that my countrymen were better colonists. Look at this superb country, the thousands of acres with fruit growing, what do they do with it? Send away some of their apples and pears to other colonies” (it was the day before they had begun to ship fruit to England). “With the rest they make jam, and put it in those ugly tins. The sugar costs them so much that the price of the jam is dear. They should plant thousands of acres with beetroot and get their own sugar. Then again,” he continued, “why only jam? Why can't they preserve it in bottles, crystallise it and in every way use it as we do. I shall go back to France when I can spare the time and arrange a company to do what I have told you.”

It was a fine sketch idea of a good scheme, and so far as I am aware has not yet been attempted, so there may be the nucleus of an idea which might commend itself to someone, and the Government of the Commonwealth might use it. The law stepped in to stop the schemes of my chance acquaintance. It must be said that his most intimate friends in Sydney stuck to him most loyally in his trouble. Well, there we are; he was only an incident, and I bring him in to give his ideas, which were quite excellent.

The first week's bill was paid at a private hotel, a place with beautiful grounds, where I used to pace up and down thinking out what really could be done. Mount Wellington used to look down as if to say: “Stay here. Surely this place can be hospitable to you.”

IN TASMANIA

As I was not earning money, of course, I had hired a horse by the week—very foolish, but really, the expenses otherwise were so small, but I discovered the surrounding country and appreciated the gorgeous spot I had dumped myself into.

One morning I took up the only morning paper and saw that a firm of solicitors, Messrs Butler, McIntyre & Butler, wanted a clerk—"one with a knowledge of shorthand preferred." I had only learnt this at school, as I have explained, and told this to the head of the firm when I called. He took me on at two pounds a week and told me that I should have four weeks in which to practise my shorthand, and then they only wanted it for correspondence. In the meantime I was put on to keep the costs ledger, and make a fair copy occasionally of a document. I developed a legal hand and sometimes they would give me a deed to take home and engross at threepence a folio. I would sit up until two and three in the morning and earn perhaps twelve-and-sixpence. With this coming, perhaps twice a week, and no children then, the small cottage we had was paid for, and instalments on some terrible furniture bought on the hire system. I never saw such stuff before or since. It couldn't have been made by Chinamen, for they turn out quite decent stuff. The chairs had a way of smashing—not simply breaking—when my sixteen stone sat on them. It was a business buying it all, for the husband and wife would both join in and repeat one after the other any little suggestion of an extra requirement. For instance, I knew that I should have to chop wood—we did not burn coal—and I ventured on saying that I should have an axe. "A haxe," said the husband. "He wants a haxe," repeated the wife, and that was scheduled. Then came the all-important matter of

IN THE PARLIAMENTARY GALLERY

the dinner-service: "Will he have the Rhines or the Blue Pheasants?" and his wife echoed: "The Rhines or the Blue Pheasants?" That was a puzzler, but then came the idea that it was the pattern of the delf. However, eventually the fifty pounds' worth of stuff was installed. I used to think of the late Mr Gladstone when I put in twenty minutes every morning splitting logs, but it was great exercise and I can recommend it.

It was a fine experience, that six months of the law, it gave one the proper legal mind, there was a chance of getting my articles or becoming a certificated conveyancer, but it was all a bit slow, yet part of an extensive education.

It was at Hobart that I had my first opportunity of embarking into journalism. It was while I was in the lawyer's office. It was to send condensed reports of Parliamentary proceedings to the Launceston paper, the *Examiner*. I was to assist the man who knew the ropes, but Parliament opened at four o'clock and my office hours were until five o'clock. However, by taking no luncheon hour I was allowed to leave at four o'clock, and two pounds a week for four days' work was a pretty useful addition to my money. It was easy at first: the Upper House or Legislative Council was assigned to me. Some of the old gentlemen were great sticklers for proper Parliamentary procedure, and what Lord Palmerston and Mr Gladstone had said on certain points was frequently quoted. My senior had the House of Assembly, which of course contained many more members, and where the real work was done. I proved satisfactory to the *Examiner* people, and within a month, owing to my colleague leaving, I had a rise and appointed a junior. Then followed the regular correspondence for the same paper, a weekly column in the *Sydney Bulletin*, and work for the *Melbourne Age*, etc.

CHAPTER VIII

LIMELIGHT AND MUSIC

My Wall Advertiser—The Boy Bultitude—An Explosion—Engaging an Orchestra—That Terrible Night—Smashed by a Gale

A COMFORTABLE office and a thirst to make more money and I remembered the advice given before leaving London: that showing limelight advertisements on a wall might be a good stunt. Mentioning it to another man he agreed to put up the money to give it a chance. I went over to Melbourne and bought the latest thing in dissolving view apparatus, with everything to make oxygen gas, and a big assortment of good pictures which should be shown at intervals between the advertisements. A proper site was selected, a little wooden house was erected on the roof of some lower buildings, and the high side wall of an adjacent warehouse was "faced" and painted for the screen. The advertisements came in readily, but the difficulty was to get the slides properly painted. At last I secured quite an artistic sign-writer who used to do a dozen real well, and then go off on a jag for a week, and new matter which came into me had to be done by myself as well as I could. I nearly shared the same fate in the early stages as befell General Bethune, who told me, years ago, how, in endeavouring to make oxygen gas, he blew his arm off. I had received explicit instructions how to generate the gas in a retort, and all went well for the first week or two, then through some bad manganese I couldn't get the gas to start bubbling through the water filter. I had a wonderful office boy, with a head

QUESTION OF GAS

on him like an old man, though he was only fourteen. I named him Bultitude, for Mr Anstey's "Vice Versa" was the rage at the time. Bultitude said: "The gas won't come off, sir, we must make the fire bigger." It was a very hot summer day; we burnt everything we could find; but no result. At last—bang! Out flew two of the windows. I was thrown into the corner in a sitting position, Bultitude laid on his back. There had been an explosion—so the paper said next morning. However, as we were alive to tell the tale, I thought after that it was better to send the bag round to the theatre every day to get it filled. Of course the hydrogen came from the ordinary gas tap. Those were initial difficulties. I used to show them statuary, views, rat-swallowers, and every form of lurid and attractive advertisements.

The interest of the crowd waned a little after a month or two, so I had the idea that a small orchestra would add to the attraction, and immediately rushed round to my advertisers, telling them of the magnificent new feature, and, to their credit, they gave increased orders. Fortunately my sign-painter was sober, and we were all ready for the big night. The difficulty was to find the band, but a printer who knew the ropes of everything said he could do it. In he came the next day saying: "They don't look very showy, sir, but they will look all right when they begin on Saturday." You should have seen them! The spokesman of the party asked and received a dollar "to wet it." As an afterthought I asked them what instruments they played. "Three brass and a clarionet," was the reply. "Mine's the clarionet," added the spokesman. I had to hope for the best. I had got some posters out and, with new slides announced, hoped for a good crowd in the street. It was a dark night and there was no

LIMELIGHT AND MUSIC

doubt that the pictures would show up well. The crowd didn't get interfered with in the evening by passing vehicles. My band was late, but eventually they tumbled up the ladder on to a bench on the low roof. "Go on, boys," I said to them. "Go ahead. I'm going to start the pictures." Some fearsome noises were produced in their "preliminary," and a yell went up from the crowd, which was growing larger and larger. I was furious and, leaving a pretty picture on the wall, stepped outside crying: "Why the hell don't you begin? You've been fooling long enough. Play a march to begin with." The cornet looked blind, but managed to say: "We used to begin with a polka. It will make them lively like." "Well, begin," I shouted in despair. "I've paid you to play. Let them have a tune." They began, and almost immediately any sounds were drowned in jeers and shrieks from the crowd. I have heard a few bum orchestras, but that polka! It was like a schottische played by one of the old street organs with a broken pipe or two. The clarinet was always late, but the trombone was a marvel, and played his loudest; it eventually became a solo for him. I put on all the new slides, but the hundreds in the street were all ears, no eyes. I shrieked to my four artists: "Go on; play something you know." And off they went for the "Blue Danube," after passing round a black bottle which I saw contained square-face (hollands gin). I left my assistant, just engaged, to go on with the pictures and went down in the crowd. I was yelling with them in a minute. It was the wildest fun ever witnessed. The players got worse. Why were instruments ever invented? But the trombone stuck to it and the blasts from that terrible weapon of his could have been heard for miles. The clarinet tried to get up and shake his instrument, but tobogganed down

CRAVING FOR PROPRIETORSHIP

the sloping roof. There was a cry of horror, but he struck the coping all right ; smashed his instrument, and eventually went to sleep. Prospects for the "Lime-light Advertiser" went out to sixty-six to one offered.

I was always on the look-out for something new, and took it into my noddle one day to start a weekly paper of my own, which should astonish the city. It did. I may mention that it was to replace another venture—enormous hand-painted advertisements on special hoardings I had. On a certain holiday a pal and myself drank rum at a pub all the afternoon, while watching a terrible gale demolish the entire structure. No one was working, but I knocked up the foreman of a timber-yard hard by and we attempted to shore up the big spread of painted frames. It was no good, and I saw my little investment smashed up. However, the rum made me think that it didn't matter a damn and I'd think of something else the next day. It wasn't worth while putting up the hoarding again, as the novelty had gone off. I thought of all sorts of things, but at last, when taking a deep quencher, decided it should be a newspaper—of my very own. The funny part of it all was that I could have found a bit of capital. But not a bit of it. I was going on my own absolutely—it was to be "Willie's," that little bundle of boodle, when made. I sat up of nights thinking it out, and swaggered in the bars telling the boys I was going to give them "something they could read." They were all looking forward to it—so they said, but a few old stagers grinned. I thought them awful swine for doing so, and when they saw I resented, they mollified me, but put my back up again by trying to dissuade me from the scheme. I had made a bit of success with one or two ventures, but I did myself well, and was living on an overdraft which one kindly

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bank-manager was brick enough to give me : he said I was enterprising—which, looking back, was a fact.

There was not enough sport in the local daily—threepence, please, for your four pages!

There was no doubt in my mind from the very first about the title : it was to be the *Referee*. The daily paper, which had a jobbing business, wouldn't take on the printing of my sheet, so I looked about for a place. Another firm wanted everything explained as to finance—he was no good to me, although I might have told him the tale ; but we lived in a small community, where the “dope” of everybody could be easily known, and—a “little bit more.”

CHAPTER IX

MY FIRST NEWSPAPER

Finding a Printer—First Number of *The Referee*—Fancy Founts of Type
—The Freak Weekly—Advertisers Kick—Pied by Fire

THERE was a little printing office—it was really a shed—in a weather-board structure up near where I lived. It was on a piece of waste land, had a corrugated-iron roof, and the names of the two partners were painted on the shingle outside. I had given them a few odd jobs and one of them came to see me. He was a little chap, long arms, hooked nose and red-headed—a Quilp, yet the most benevolent little man possible. He said “sir” every other sentence and was really after the job. I offered him a cigar and he nearly said “my lord.” His partner was a tall lean Scotsman, and I knew his country well—he was mine: but they sought *me*; still, as luck would have it, they *were* paid—see it wet, see it dry!

It was my intention, as I have said, to make the paper a weekly, and to charge threepence—it was as easy to get this price as a penny. The size was to be four pages of about the same size as that little paper the *Racehorse*. The front page I proposed to produce on the lines of the *Sporting Times*, with bright paragraphs; and inside, racing articles, short stories and bits of odd sport and personal stuff. That was all right so far as it went: the “scenario” was excellent. The amicable Quilp’s eyes glistened; he said it had been the “dream of his life to print a newspaper.” The Scotsman, who could have held up the little man with

MY FIRST NEWSPAPER

his right hand, grunted his assent. So long as he had his pipe in his mouth, and a stick of tobacco to cut up when the pipe was empty, he was quite happy and would never talk.

It was arranged that the paper was to come out in three weeks' time; so leaflets were printed announcing the fact, and I sent them all over the town and to various friends up-country. There were several congratulatory replies—letters which I now wish I had kept, as the only congratulations I received were before the publication of this historic journal. I burned the midnight oil writing everything which could be thought of. I praised everyone and everything—I thought that would mean two or three thousand copies at all events. In two days the printers had plenty of copy to go on with. To race about and get advertisements was the next thing; these came in most encouragingly. Be it understood that I was a very young man, but felt full of hope and courage and, I think I may add, resourcefulness. After the evening meal I looked in at the printing office, smoking my pipe by the oil lamps, and talking to the partner comps. I sent out for a couple of quarts of colonial ale—it was extremely good in Hobart—and I kept the big partner going with a superior tobacco to that which he was smoking.

It was an exciting moment when I had the "galley" proof of my first article. Was it the light or what was it? Something was wrong. I could read the top half better than the middle. Perhaps the lamp was faulty. At any rate, I could not decipher the bottom of the proof at all. I took it closer to the lamp and found that it was set in three different types. On my suggesting that this was curious, I was informed that their fount of long primer had run out, and they had

PATCHWORK PRINT

to go on to minion and finish up with ruby. This was a nice state of affairs, but they assured me that it looked all right. And such type, too!—battered and old. However, perhaps it would be “all right on the night.” The utmost cheerfulness prevailed, and they loved to hear my stories about England. The Scotsman had left his native country when quite a child, and the amiable dwarf had been born in the colony where he lived. An occasional English illustrated newspaper was delightful to them. I would point out the printing to them, and they would turn the conversation. They were never satisfied until I had told them all about London, listening like children to the simplest stories, and when I gave them one of Paris, I am quite sure they thought I was lying. On one occasion when I told them a slightly improper story, the most bearded chestnut I could think of, Quilp dropped his composing stick and died laughing. The Scotsman, who did not see it, regarded him with pity and asked me to tell him another: perhaps he thought he might see the second. However, I did not repeat the experiment; but reeled off little anecdotes about life in Europe.

You should have seen the paper when it came out! It was the most beautiful patchwork that was ever perpetrated on the public. It was no good correcting the proofs: they would not make the revisions properly. At last I gave it up in despair, for the thing had to appear. I had got hold of some paper; a bright pink, not what I wanted, but the publication was overdue. It was machined on an old hand press, and I could have wept with mortification when I saw the first number. Nevertheless, my “firm” were as pleased as possible, so there was only one thing to do—to chime in with their happy mood. They worked

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far on into the night getting off one thousand copies of this wonderful production. Shades of Caxton! It was the biggest freak ever struck off I should imagine during the last two hundred years. You should have seen the advertisements: the finest variety of type ever designed since the founding of the printing press. The front page made it. Here I must proffer a very much belated apology to Mr John Corlett, inasmuch as I freely "borrowed" some of the brightest pars. from a few *Pink 'Uns* I had received from home. Little scraps of poetry about a celebrity in England I altered to suit the principal local concert singer. The most outrageous piracy was committed.

With regard to my own stuff, there was a column story of love and murder printed in such gradations of type that it might easily have served to indicate the downward steps to the lowest depths of despair taken by the heroine. They read it, though, and liked it, which was rather extraordinary. The advertisers "kicked" a bit; but they all paid up promptly to keep me going. I had a very bad time with one local draper, however. He had read one "borrowed" paragraph which I had slightly altered, and added a little more "nutmeg" to. He was not very busy that day, and when I entered his establishment he met me with the paper in his hand. There and then he entered into a long homily on the iniquity of the par. His obsequious assistants cast their eyes down as if to support him, and I felt an outcast, a pariah, a murderer of the Y.M.C.A. morals of the "rag trade." I had no time to argue, however, so meekly asked him if he would pay my account. This was the last straw; he hurled a torrent of invective at me. I pretended to be much impressed by his address, and, sighing, said:

WHAT HO ! THE CONFLAGRATION

“Perhaps you are right; at all events, you must not punish me for printers’ errors.” I don’t know what induced me to say such a rotten, stupid thing, but I presume he had posed long enough, and we parted quite friendly. He did not withdraw his patronage, as he at first threatened, and I felt a load lifted from my shoulders as I stepped into the street.

My paper was supposed to come out weekly, but it didn’t—in fact, there was no regular publishing date. We did not see the Scotsman for a few days after the first publishing day. His wife told me he had a bilious attack, but I discovered him in a little roadside house about ten miles out of the town one day with a glass of whisky in his hand and singing “Annie Laurie.” I soon gauged the situation, filled him right up, made him recite verses of Bobby Burns, got him into my buggy and gave his wife five shillings to dose him with tea. The amiable Quilp was a very sober man, and was scandalised at his partner’s behaviour; but I heard subsequently that it was a common occurrence with the latter when a pound or two “ready” came in. I do not know whether it was Quilp or the Scotsman, but one evening after the fifth number was out—about eleven weeks after the first had been issued—I was riding home about eleven o’clock in the evening when I saw the local fire engine being hurried along, and there was a glare in the sky. I pulled up my horse, having soon located the place. The corrugated iron had fallen in, the long primer, the minion, the ruby and the file of my newspaper were “pied” and fused beyond recognition. They were not insured: neither was I.

Thus ended my first lesson in running something of my own. Do I bore you? I hope not, as it was an

MY FIRST NEWSPAPER

incident of early days. This freak publication had kept me going ; it was far more profitable than many of the ambitious efforts of the present day, run with thousands of pounds of capital, and paid better than other papers I have owned, or part owned.

CHAPTER X

RACING AND BILLIARDS

Jubilee Plunger's Game at Pyramids—Tasmanian Owners—Darebin's Derby—Three Great Horses—Joe Thompson's Missed Bargain—An Amateur Book—Jim Mace's Lost Diamond

OF course I was in touch with all the sports of the city. Jack Hadley, who kept the Ship Hotel, made a double-event book and played a good game of billiards. My game of pool and pyramids soon improved, but of course it had to be paid for, as it had been in England. It is astonishing how we can lose money on the billiard-table. I used to strike a rather brilliant winning hazard, but there was a man more than thirty years my senior who could outgeneral me. He used to say: "You can play better than I ever did, but you haven't patience. You want to show the room how you can do an impossible shot, whereas I never go out for them." This always reminds me of the late Ernest Benzon, who learnt his billiards in Australia. He was there part of the time I was. In later years I used to play with him; he always fancied his game. The first introduction was in the Members' Enclosure at Kempton when he backed Minting for the Jubilee in 1887. Fry told him that he was foolish to throw his money away, adding: "You'll go broke, Mr Benzon." "I may do," replied the Jubilee, "but not while there are horses like Minting." I had the same idea to small money. Those who remember the race will recall that a horse named the Cobbler took such a long lead of his field that one could scarcely imagine that he

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would ever be caught, but when it came to racing he cracked up and, Minting sweeping along on his own, never gave the opposition a chance, sailing in a very easy winner. Benzon won twenty-three thousand pounds; it didn't do him much good, poor fellow. A horse named Tyrone was second, and the aforementioned Cobbler managed to hold on to take third place. Benzon averaged a little over four to one to his money; Minting starting at seven to two.

The reason I bring Benzon in here is that he was in Australia during part of my days, and was reckoned the biggest "can"—derivation "mug"—among new chums who ever came there. Although he was supposed to have lost such an enormous lot of money, very little of it was paid—he was under age—so it was not a dear experience. But I was talking about pyramids. One day in the old-fashioned Union Hotel in Clayton Square, Liverpool, Benzon and I had our usual five games and I happened to win a bit. I played to weary him out, and I remember him saying afterwards: "Will you play up your luck?" There and then striding out in front of me, turning round occasionally, he kept on saying: "We shall win money. It's a certainty; I felt like this once at Windsor when I won twenty-three thousand pounds." We went into a small betting club, and he insisted on my following his tips. I did, and from winning the three pounds over pyramids ran it into eighty pounds ready, backing four winners in succession. Benzon won over two hundred and fifty pounds. He was paid it nearly all, and was tickled to death. I smiled as I saw them gathering round and trying to lure him on to half-an-hour at jackpots, but Benzon by this time had learnt a bit, and was ingenious enough to say he couldn't leave his friend, meaning myself. We went back to

BENZON'S MORTGAGES

the old Neptune in Clayton Square and had a regal dinner in a private room.

It was in that same hotel where some years before Benzon lost two thousand pounds to Richard Fry in a couple of hours in the billiard-room. Fry played a very sound game, and they bet tens and twenties on the shots. Many of the statements about Benzon are pure fiction. He had an extraordinary way with him, and Liverpool was not the only Lancashire town I met him in. He would stalk into Bailey's hotel at Blackpool, saying he was in a devil of a hole. At that time he was getting seven pounds a week and had mortgaged it to more than one pal. He was in desperation one day and sent a telegram to have it forwarded direct to himself at Blackpool; he lived at the South Shore Hotel. We would renew the pyramids contest. I am quite sure that if he had come into another big fortune he would not have lost it. Parenthetically, this might be taken as an object lesson by those who have money to bequeath to very young men. I never inherited any more in my life than a few hundred pounds; I am therefore not talking feelingly.

A year or two before he died Benzon used to write to me occasionally about the articles I had written, and tell me some odd experiences he had met with, but they never were exciting. One of the stories concerning him was that he never would wear a shirt more than once—that is to say, it would go on him as it came from the shirt maker, but after that he never wanted to see it again, however well it might have been laundered. I asked him about this one day, and he laughed, saying: "What man doesn't like new things?" But that same afternoon he gazed longingly in Hope Brothers' window, wishing he could get three. It was irresistible, and there was a little

RACING AND BILLIARDS

parcel sent home to him that evening. Many who read this may in their lives have felt awful at a shirt shortage or a boot bankruptcy. But I must get back to the old Ship Hotel at Hobart, for other stories which could be told of him appeared in that very stupid book as to how he lost his fortune.

The Ship was a regular club. One of the most prominent young men was Billy Agnew, son of Dr Agnew, who, while a medical practitioner, made a big fortune out of Mount Bischoff shares. This wonderful producer of tin laid the foundation of the permanent affluence of many others in the island. Billy Agnew had a nice place half way between Hobart and Launceston, and a good stable of horses. His colours were popular and he was usually represented at the various meetings in Tasmania. He was a very sporting-looking chap and would brush his hair forward at the sides just round his ears, which was the doggy-cum-horsey vogue some generations before. He wore low-crowned white felt hats with a broad brim, blue birds-eye ties and check suits; in fact, his whole appearance suggested sporting prints of the mid-Victorian era. His father, too, was typical of some of the old gentlemen we see in a folio at a print shop. Father and son were two examples of many I have met during travels who liked to maintain tradition. A great friend of young Agnew was R. G. Talbot. He had an estate called Malahide, named after his relation, the Irish peer, Lord Talbot of Malahide. Talbot also had a few horses and was partner with William Guesdon, an auctioneer, in a real good colt, named Darebin, who won the Melbourne Derby. Darebin was trained by Dakin, who was responsible afterwards for editing the *Australian Stud-Book*. There was great excitement prior to the big V.R.C. Meeting in 1880, and quite a

MEETING THE "LEVIATHAN"

little function at the Ship when they went over to see the race run. Talbot was not a very communicative man, but Guesdon told us all to go over to Melbourne and back Darebin. Only a few had a bet about the horse straight out—the majority of us taking him in doubles with various horses for the Melbourne Cup. We certainly got a leg in by Darebin winning, but it was the year that the outsider Zulu won the cup. This horse might never have been started, as he had been dead lame a few days before, but the lucky drawer of Zulu in one of the mammoth sweeps offered the owner a thousand pounds to nothing if he would let Zulu take his chance. The owner was so impressed with the fatalism which had led to Zulu seeing the post that he backed him at thirty-three and forty to one on the day. What luck!

A lot of us stayed behind in Hobart, and waited on that fateful Saturday to see whether Darebin would win. It was the usual atmosphere of expectancy, watching every minute for the telegraph boy who should bring the message. At last it came, and with it a telegram to the Ship and another hotel that they should be open house to the boys that evening. It was soon after this that there came on the first race-meeting I had seen in the "tight little island," as Tasmania is called. The majority of the leading members of the ring in Melbourne came over for the fortnight, for the Launceston meeting followed Hobart. There was great excitement in the city of course, meeting the horses at the station, and others which had come by water. This was the first time I had ever met the late Joe Thompson; of course he was very much in evidence. Barney Thompson, his brother, who, in this year of 1914 manages the business in Jermyn Street, was there too and the present silver-haired Joe Marks, who bets

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on the rails in England was a dark-haired, good-looking young man. The Barnards and Alf Joseph—the latter then Mayor of Sandhurst (Bendigo)—also visited the meeting. Alf Joseph had a good reception in England when, years ago, he came over on a visit.

The way they all hustled to lay us doubles and trebles at the Ship was an education. They would soon find out whether a man's credit was all right, and the settling took place at the close of the meeting, and nearly everyone paid. At this meeting for the Hobart Cup I had a great fancy for a horse named Stockwell by St Albans, an imported sire, by Blair Athol. I had seen this Stockwell running at a small meeting, and had taken a violent fancy to him, thinking him a horse and a half. He was a beautiful chestnut and a three-year-old at the time; I backed him straight out and in doubles. Joe Thompson on the first evening I met him asked me whether there was anything likely among the local horses to win the Hobart Cup and I told him what I thought about this Stockwell; he told me that he had heard about him too. Early judgment over that colt has frequently been repeated about others since, not exactly an intuition, but that combined with sound appreciation. Later in the evening Joe said to me: "The name of that horse is Stockwell, isn't it?" He seemed peculiarly interested. He was in with a nice light-weight and it seemed a real good thing for him, but the boy on him couldn't extend him, and he was just pipped on the post by a mare called the Marchioness. By the way, the owner of this one called nearly all his horses after characters from Dickens. I had "counted my chickens" with regard to Stockwell, and it was a bitter blow, but, fortunately, I had taken a bet about the winner, so things were not so bad, but that wretched riding was



Clarence Halley, Newmarket

THE LATE JOE THOMPSON

The "Leviathan" of Australia, and a big man on the English Rails



TOM HALES THE CRACK

perfectly tragic. It was so apparent that Stockwell immediately became favourite for the Launceston Cup. They sent over to Melbourne for the star jockey at the time, Tom Hales, to ride him, and he trotted in, and a full brother, then known as Bagot, but whose name was afterwards changed to Malua, won the chief two-year-old race. These two horses, with another I forget the name of, were owned by an ex-Archdeacon of the Church, who afterwards was a member of the Executive Council; at that time he was known as the Hon. Thomas Reibey. His three horses were offered to Joe Thompson for a thousand pounds. It was a gift, but, through some extraordinary mood he was in when the offer was made, Thompson, who was not a haggler as a rule, tried to bargain and the deal didn't come off. What he missed! I tried to get a bit of money together to buy one of them, but that didn't come off either. Stockwell was sold, and Malua went to Mr J. O. Inglis, a well-known gentleman rider in Victoria.

Again bad riding beat Stockwell in the Melbourne Cup the following year, for his jockey couldn't hold him, and for a wild mile and seven furlongs he made the pace a cracker, leading his field. Tom Hales, whom I have just mentioned, had a mount in the race. He sang out to Stockwell's jockey, Riley: "Take a pull at him and you can't lose." When too late he tried to, and was caught and beaten by the Assyrian, owned by Mr J. E. Savile, who settled down near Stamford in England and brought over the little Australian horse, Ringmaster. I had backed Stockwell and made others do the second to win us a small fortune, and it was a terrible experience. Malua *did* win the Cup in 1884, carrying his nine stone twelve if you please. Not only that, but, pulling up a similar weight, took the

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Newmarket Handicap, a six-furlong sprint. He was one of the best horses that ever appeared on a race-course in any country. He was the sire of Maluma, who was brought over to this country by Mr William Allison, and sold afterwards to Lady de Bathe. There were men who made fortunes over Malua's win in the Cup. He was of such class that I think if he could have been brought to England and properly acclimatised he could have carried top weight in a Cesarewitch successfully, and was good enough to win an Ascot Gold Cup in many a year. I wonder what Joe Marks thinks. Perhaps Richard Wootton is not quite old enough to remember, but Brewer, who used to train at Newmarket, and now has gone back to Australia, has talked to me several times about him. There were men who thought Malua almost as good a horse as the great Carbine. That will accentuate the chance that was missed.

There was another horse in Tasmania, Sheet Anchor, who won the Melbourne Cup the year after Malua; three hundred pounds would have bought him. Mind you, I am talking about three horses quite first class, one of them an animal of a decade. I believe, too, that Stockwell, if they could have trained him properly after that Melbourne Cup, would have turned out a great horse, but Malua—he was a horse and three-quarters.

It was soon after the Hobart Meeting I have just mentioned that I started an amateur book and would lay the two principal races of the day at the country meetings: the hurdle race and steeplechase or the handicap and sprint. It worked out pretty well, for everyone was allowed to do as they liked in the hotels and on a racecourse, and it was not a bit undignified to operate in this way of laying. There was a charming

JIM MACE SLEEPS

spirit of chaff about every wager laid which was sufficient compensation for what was done. Some of the bets took a bit of collecting; nevertheless it was picked up from time to time, and made a steady addition to spending money. It was inevitable to mix it, and occasionally I had to go in and back 'em. I remember once backing a double, treble and quadruple—that's a tall order—with an amateur bookmaker, a relative of a celebrated British admiral. He lost heavily, and when the usual settling came about he had gone back to Melbourne. Naturally, I tried to get my bit, and eventually took half the money to square it from that delightful chap, poor Jack Saqui, who kept a cigar shop in Melbourne. Jack Saqui, for whom I shall always have the greatest respect, was the son of old Austin Saqui, a contemporary of Joe Thompson and once a partner of Jim Mace. Jack Saqui was the father of Miss Maie Saqui, who was at the Gaiety for some years, a pretty girl and much respected.

While speaking of Mace, when I was first in Melbourne he had an hotel, and of course a big bar in Bourke Street. Jim used to sit there on quite warm days with a very swell fur coat with big astrakhan collar, and a silk hat well polished—this was the real style for ex-heavyweights, John L. Sullivan also affecting the same rig-out in his country, where the climate certainly suited it better. Jim Mace wore a superb diamond ring, a single stone, which he much prized. He used to get a bit drowsy in the afternoon and early evening, and one day the "boys"—that is, the tough division—got him to take a little more than usual, which made him sleep sounder than ever; they greased his finger and had the ring. Jim was in a great state about it, and swore the most terrible

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vengeance, but I think listened to wiser counsel and offered fifty to get it back. At first they were frightened to send any sort of ambassador, but eventually Mace got his own again. In Melbourne there was every evidence of prosperity about him, but he was no business man and it was rather sad to see him in later life, when he was nearly blind.

CHAPTER XI

RUNNING AN ENTERTAINMENT

Amateur Brass Band—My Mind Reader—Launched in the Show Business—In the Pay Box—The Show on Tour—Extra Liability—A Cheque for a Million

FISHING was the principal fun ; we would take afternoons at it, going from the wharf near my office in a whale boat, and we had splendid sport always. Bill Guesdon, whom I have mentioned as the part owner of Darebin, organised an amateur brass band. He bought all the instruments himself and used to take the boys down the harbour in a ketch to practise—so considerate ! He wanted me to learn to play a big brass fellow ; but although I went out in the country for two days, and tried to blow it, my lips weren't strong enough, or something.

It was some little time after the paper venture that I happened one day to hear of a man, called Professor Rice, who had arrived in Hobart that day by the boat. I thought there might be a bit of copy in him, or perhaps I was curious to know his game, as I was always on the look-out for anything new to make a bit over. I asked the barmaid at the "Ship," and she said he was a conjurer, she thought, or mind reader or something. That set me thinking I would run across him, and that's how I went into the show business for a time. "Here he is," said the barmaid, and in walked a tall spare man with a black moustache, greasy top hat and well-worn frock-coat—a professional of sorts obviously.

RUNNING AN ENTERTAINMENT

I had heard of him through a friend who had travelled down on the boat, and he had been well boosted to my pal by the agent who travelled with him. I could see the Professor was a stranger to Australia, and heard him talking with an American twang to the barmaid. He took a soiled silk handkerchief out of his pocket, and, while I couldn't hear the conversation, I saw that he was telling her to tie a series of reef knots. She did this, and by a rapid twist of his hands he had in a moment freed the handkerchief, and was waving it in the air without a knot. It was done with such a professional air that I saw he was an expert, and obviously in the business. We did not take long in striking up an acquaintance in the hotel, and we were quickly having a drink with each other, and the next day he was in my office. I soon heard that I was the very man he had been looking for—one able to exploit him through having just enough money; besides which, newspaper experience would be helpful too. Sleight-of-hand was only a side show of his business, which was that of a thought reader. It was the time when Bishop and Cumberland were at the game in England. He found pins, pen-holders, and pocket-knives which had been secreted by me. I saw that he could do simple things like this to beat the band, and I tried him to see if he could spot a winner or two; but he was uneducated over this course. Nevertheless, he held out the best hopes that he might accomplish even that after a bit.

I bound him down to an engagement, so much a week and a share, and then we were ready to go ahead. The first thing he told me was that I shouldn't let him walk about the streets—it was such a small place that people would soon get to know him, and there would be no air of mystery about him when the show opened

IN THE PAY BOX

a fortnight after. He added that I should hire a closed carriage and that he should wear a cloak and a veil. Now, in the very bad weather in some other parts, when the flies and mosquitoes simply ate you alive, we used to don a sort of coarse silk netted veil, but I couldn't stand him swanking about this mystery business.

He was extremely ready witted, very bright but quite uneducated, although he told me he had been a schoolmaster in America before starting out as a mind reader.

I found the money for him to have a new fit-out of clothes and, talk about not seeking publicity, when he got his new light grey frock-coat suit he would never leave the bars, and used to show conjuring tricks to all and sundry, much to my annoyance, as I wanted them all kept fresh for the grand opening night. He could do one or two cabinet stunts fairly well too; and I had his fit-up repaired. In the true colonial style we had a brass band outside the town hall for the first night of the show. I was in the pay box; it was the dear old price that used to take so well out there—"Three, two, one" (shillings). It was the most fascinating half-hour that I ever had in my life, raking in the money; I had indeed struck oil, I thought. We took eighty odd pounds, and, as the hall was not expensive, I began to hope for the best. He gave a very fair show to start with, but there had been a local football dinner or something on earlier in the evening and the members came *en bloc* to the shilling seats—they queered our pitch, chiefly by mocking his curious English.

The climax came when he did a Davenport Brothers exposure and was supposed to interview the ghost of a certain Captain Cuttle. He had a curious bit of

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dialogue in which there was what he thought his wittiest lines. It brought down the house and finished the show, for the footballers wouldn't let him continue. The dialogue ran: "How long have you been dead, and who killed you, Captain Cuttle?"

"Thirty years. My cook killed me. She gave me an old hen what laid on my stomach." Now I ask you—— Well, no matter. I tried the second week at a smaller hall; but could only get it half full with plenty of paper.

He used to give private séances, and the fees paid at these were his own "perks." He was an absolute charlatan; but people paid their guineas freely enough to hear about absent friends and those departed. He sat in a darkened room and never seemed stuck for an idea. Eventually, with the pressure of my own business, I sent him on tour under the management of a man to whom I wanted to do a good turn—one I thought I could trust; but I knew that his propensity lay in the direction of a bottle of whisky during the evening. However, he promised to keep straight.

The things the pair let me into need not be told in detail. One of the little orgies cost me a new inside for a piano; they poured everything they could find inside it one night. I paid a flying visit once to see the show. This was what I found: my friend the manager, who, by the by, had once been in a big position at home, was snoring in the pay box, and the thought reader had elaborated everything until his entertainment dragged on to a tremendous length. He had invented new wheezes for Captain Cuttle—more drivelling than the previous stock jokes. At last, when I got tired of paying, they both did a guy with a week's takings to another colony.

My brother managed him afterwards, and they were

A LUNATIC'S CHEQUES

nearly drowned once in crossing a river. They wired that they had lost all their belongings, and begged me to send a fiver. For once in my life I was not a fool, and tore up the telegram. A week after they came into my office—I was by this time living in Brisbane—each with a brand-new suit of reach-me-downs on, and tried to get me interested in some new business Rice had invented. I was not having any. I may tell you, however, and this is rather curious, that the thought reader had developed a most extraordinary talent for finding winners. He did not try to come it on me that he did this by mysterious influences, or that he had second sight, but there was something uncanny in the persistent way he did spot them, as one or two of the local bookmakers knew: he never had to pay them. My brother believed in him no end, and told me I was wrong not to go on with him as he was “so wonderful in getting out of a town.” I knew that. My brother played the piano pretty well, and sang too, and thus the show could be varied. By the way, this same brother once sang at a lunatic asylum at Gladesville in New South Wales, and one of the inmates wrote him out a cheque for a million after the show, expressing his pleasure! The giver was a poor chap named Harry Roberts, a good fellow who used to be about Sydney; he was a brother of ex-Mayor Roberts there. At one time Harry had a small moneylending business and used to advertise that he had “£10,000 to lend.” Racing did him in, and he found his way to Gladesville.

CHAPTER XII

MASONRY AND SINGERS

My Mother Lodge—Bob and Roland Cunningham—Amy Sherwin—A Pushing Tobacconist—Wanting Thompson's Patronage—Telling off my Bumps—The Phrenologist wants to go Racing—Good Cricketers—Starting a Time-table

WHEN just twenty-one I was initiated into Freemasonry, in Hobart, in the Pacific Lodge 801 E.C., and met many good fellows. We used to have a good cold supper, and the lodge was open house in its hospitality; no introduction nor formality except going through the tests was necessary; and I can tell you that this should be the true spirit of the craft. Many ship captains will remember with gratification the happy evenings there. Each brother had his stock song or recitation and we knew exactly what to expect, but bore it with the most fraternal amiability. The Mark Lodge was splendidly conducted, the work being perfect. Masonry certainly was a leveller in a place with so many cliques.

The Cunninghams, Robert and Roland, so well known on the stage and at the Motor Club, came from Hobart. When I was there "Bob" was in a lawyer's office opposite my show, and I can see him as a fat boy walking over to a Government office with a big packet of deeds under his arm. Neither of us thought then that he was destined to develop such a superb tenor voice and be a star in the Carl Rosa Co. Roland was younger, and at school. Lemprière Pringle, another star in the Carl Rosa Co., also came from Hobart. Miss Amy Sherwin, who made a big name on the concert

JOINING THE "CRAFT"

stage, was a Tasmanian. She strengthened her voice by going every morning to the top of a high hill at the Huon, where she lived, and singing her loudest facing the wind.

I have just mentioned being made a Mason in Hobart. There was a man there who was initiated about the same time as myself, but in an Irish lodge. He was one of many brothers. They were all of the same type—over six feet in height, gaunt and lean; they wore long frock-coats to cover their spare limbs. One giant had taken a tobacco shop, and it was during one of the Hobart race-meetings he spoke to me in his shop. He was doing all he could to attract custom. Joe Thompson was down in Tasmania for the races; the cigar dealer asked me whether it would be possible to get Mr Thompson in as a customer. I said I thought it would, and advised him to send a letter to the great man, inviting him to his shop. He of the four feet six inches of legs and six feet four inches of frame altogether—and yet he didn't weigh eleven stone—told me he thought it would be a great thing if he could advertise on his bill-heads certain special brands "as supplied to Joseph Thompson, Esq." I am telling you a fact, and do so to show that there was a certain amount of astuteness in the tobacconist's whimsical idea, for, even in that small community, the legend of racing men having the very best was well appreciated.

The giant tobacconist had all sorts of ideas about Masonry, and it was almost an education, and better than a comedy, to go and have a talk with him. He had a little wife who was a perfect terror to him, and the repetition of conversations which he had with her, apropos of taking up the craft, was a scream. He always settled her by saying that he would have the privilege of calling the Prince of Wales "brother."

MASONRY AND SINGERS

Among the side shows which he ran was that of an amateur phrenologist; and he would tell the bumps for five shillings a time. I had to give way and have my chart from him. It was a very elaborate affair, written in a big schoolboy hand. He endowed me with all sorts of vices, and concluded with the extraordinary advice that, owing to "various tendencies," I must avoid "pork and all other stimulating food." That reformed me.

Sometimes I used to sound him about racing, and he had all the narrow prejudices against it; but he was so desperate to do everything to get customers that he asked me if I would take him out to the racecourse, as there was a small meeting to take place at the time. I put him off, and suggested someone else who would show him. He then asked me if I knew of a winner, to which I replied I thought I did, but wished I had eaten my words when I saw him go to his till and fill his pockets, saying he was determined to be a sportsman, to be a man and back a horse the same as others. What I had brought upon myself leading this poor chap astray! It took me about three-quarters of an hour to make him put the money back and compel him only to take enough to pay his expenses and limit himself to two half-sovereigns in the way of punting. It will scarcely be believed that I told him if he did not put the money back at once, although it was his to do as he liked with, he should not have a bet at all. I would point him out to bookmakers as a dangerous man to have anything to do with, and if I saw him persistent I would tell the owners not to run their horses. He believed every word, and at last begged me not to give him away, as it would injure him in his business.

There were some brilliant men in the law and Government who would have adorned any country's

TIME-TABLE ERRORS

administration. One of these was the late W. R. Giblin, Premier for a time; he was lost in such a small community. Then there were some great players in cricket. George Bailey, who came over with the first Australian team; C. W. Butler, the solicitor, played well enough to be in many internationals. "Rowley" Pope, who played occasionally in visiting Australian teams and is now an eminent oculist in Sydney, was a boy at school in Hobart and I saw him frequently. They seemed to be able to get any money for new cricket grounds or pavilions or what not there, but money and incomes were not big, and my few hundreds a year put me right in it until betting on horses I hadn't seen—in other colonies—made it no good. It is a glorious country, Tasmania, and was too much endowed by Nature ever to be a convict settlement. Those days, however, at Port Arthur are in the dim distance, and should remain so, and must never be a blot on the prestige of Australians of several generations of high respectability. The early history of our colonisation was all sad: two hundred and fifty thousand natives in Tasmania when we set foot there. The last, old Truganina, died just before my time. Fighting, rum and blankets did it.

Another idea started in Hobart was a small pocket diary and time-table issued at threepence a month. It was the first unofficial guide published in Tasmania and afterwards issued in Queensland. It was stuffed full of errors with regard to the various times of stopping at different stations, but at all events it had the charm of novelty and paid a profit from the very first number. The wall-advertising business was also exploited in other colonies, now designated by the more high-sounding title of "States."

CHAPTER XIII

FIRST MEETING WITH ROBERT SIEVIER

“Bob” at Flemington—His Courage at Randwick—The Gorgeous Lammerse—Joe and the Judge—Larry Foley—Helpless New Chums—Up-Country Livings

IT was a year or two after that I first saw Robert Sievier; he was making a book on the “Hill” at Flemington. The hill is a natural mound from which one can throw a pebble on to the roof of the grand stand and just as good a view of the racing can be obtained as in the enclosure itself. A new-comer is always noted and discussed. “Robert Sutton” was very well dressed, in new light English tweeds which were our envy. I can see him now, calling the odds fearlessly, and taking in a bunch of ready money. I happened to find one or two winners that day and had chosen the hill on that one and only occasion because there had been a little balance unpaid on the previous day “inside.” The hill brought me such luck that I was able to go back to the proper atmosphere when the meeting was continued on the Thursday. Sievier paid me over two or three races and remarked the third time: “When are you going to back a loser?” He attracted a big volume of business. It was about this time that a mare named Tyropean, who had been imported from England, was put into training, and Sievier had a great opinion of her. A little brown horse named Navigator, trained and owned by Mr E. de Mestre, father of the trainer of that name who now has an establishment in England, had won the Australian Cup, an event run over two miles and a

A GORGEOUS NEW CHUM

quarter. A few months before Navigator had taken the Sydney Derby and the V.R.C. Derby. He was one of the most compact, good-looking horses that ever did a trainer credit. Then as now they laid the double, Australian Cup and Newmarket Handicap, the latter a six-furlong event. Sievier won a packet over the latter and I believe had a double as well; he was a wonderful judge of good horses. He would back them, lay them, and go the maximum with the "box," which to the uninitiated I may explain means the game of hazard—with dice.

There was a very gorgeous person named Lammerse who dawned on us about this time, becoming a persistent punter at the meetings. This Lammerse was a tall man, almost the dead spit of what Mr James Buchanan of Black and White fame was fifteen or twenty years ago. Lammerse had a most magnificent wardrobe with him, and would turn out in splendid clothes, but of a very accentuated type. One day it would be a long brown frock-coat suit with silk facings and patent-leather boots with brown tops; it all seemed to want a top hat, but instead of that he wore a brown bowler, all in the most perfect combination of colour. Another day it would be his grey effect, and of course a white bowler went with this turn-out, and he seemed to like himself in these long coats. He had diamond rings, tie rings, scarfpins, and the difficulty seemed to be not to put them all on together. He had a gold-mounted note-case with a coronet on it, whatever that might have meant to signify; possibly it was a trade mark, for I believe he hailed from Belfast, where he had been in business. His gloves too were a revelation, and he would flick his shoes with gorgeous silk handkerchiefs, some of which must have cost a guinea a time. His long feet seemed accentuated by their

FIRST MEETING WITH ROBERT SIEVIER

narrowness, and of course on the "grey" days I have spoken of he would wear white spats. I tell you he was some swell, and of course was easily spotted when he first came racing in Australia. Some of the nuts made a dead set for him, but gave him up as no good. I tell you, how he escaped in those clothes the gibes of the larrikins is difficult to say. He was one of those mystery men who occasionally "blew" in on us from the boats. He was supposed to have a lot of stuff, and betted freely from meeting to meeting, establishing his credit. One day up at Sale in Gippsland, Joe Thompson said to him over the dinner-table in the evening of the first day's racing: "Had a good day, Mr Lammerse." "Cleaned up a monkey, Thompson. I haven't really been betting," he replied. Sievier and I were there and Bob said to me: "This is a wonderful fellow to be able to pick 'em like that, why can't you do it? You've been here longer than I have or he has." I tried the next day and might have got my monkey, but after winning over the first two races about fifty was content to stop at that. That's the worst of being a piker, as they say in America. When I win a bit of real "go-on-with" stuff I have to stop.

Lammerse was looking down his nose that evening when we started back on the three or four hour journey to Melbourne. While I think of it, it was at this meeting that Joe Thompson had a little argument with the judge. He hoisted the wrong number and subsequently changed it. "You can't do that, Mr Bernard," shouted out Joe. "You've left it quite a minute." For a moment the judge was actually nonplussed, and Thompson was such a personality that he had to be temporised with. However, eventually, of course, the judge had his way. It was shortly after this that a big lot of sportsmen went up to the

“BOB’S” AUDACITY

Warrnambul Races and Lammerse dropped five hundred pounds to Sievier with the box *on the coach*. Eventually the gorgeous punter made a book on the “flat”—that is, right outside, at the meetings round Melbourne. Nearly all his lovely clothes had gone, and he was down and out. That’s what Australia does for many of them. His frock-coat new was the last word, his frock-coat old was like a bath robe.

The next time I saw Sievier was when he was betting in the ring at Randwick, Sydney. After the third race of a big day he told his punters that he had no more money with him, they could bet with him if they liked, but not for ready. He would pay and receive—giving credit—the next day. Such audacity! And they rolled up some giving the ready, but to each one he was emphatic that there would be no settlement until the following afternoon. I think he won six or seven hundred pounds over the three races which remained on the card. His open talk about being short of money appealed to the many, especially as he laid good odds. He bet to figures, which was the attraction, and didn’t mind long prices about outsiders.

There were two other Englishmen betting at the same time, Wallace and Westbrook. They, too, would offer thirty-three and forty to one when they had got a fair amount of betting over the chief goods. They dressed in light frock-coats or tweeds, both alike of course, and wore white bell-toppers (Australian term for high hats). They had a cigar shop in Sydney, with a little back room, in which there was a lot of gambling in the afternoon, and one could always be accommodated with a straight-out price about any future event race.

As I have mentioned, Barney Thompson was out there then betting on his own. Barney was the first

FIRST MEETING WITH ROBERT SIEVIER

thoroughly to appreciate England when he came over here to settle many years ago now. He liked the difference in the life, especially when racing was over. I have heard him explain it several times. In England it is possible to forget that there is such a thing as racing when the day is finished, but after many of the up-country meetings in Australia there is no distraction whatever except cards and billiards. The Thomp-sons ever had quite the artistic temperament. There were two other brothers, Jack and Harry, the former of the two was a very fine amateur boxer. He was a very splendid stamp of man, standing nearly six feet three, and could put the gloves on with the best of them, having, too, a grand muscular development. If he had taken it up seriously, it was generally said, he might have made a champion. They were very keen on boxing in Sydney, and round at Larry Foley's there were some great men brought along—Peter Jackson and Frank Slavin in particular. The latter was a coach-builder up at Muswellbrook, about sixty or seventy miles north of Newcastle, in New South Wales. Of course he was "discovered," for Larry Foley was a past master in bringing them along. They were always very keen, but in those days there were not the public matches there are to-day; in fact, there was not a bob in boxing unless one of the men could get a backer to take him out of the country. I could never understand the backing which the New Zealander Slade obtained. He was a beautiful stamp of man, but no good at all as a fighter. There were some pretty tough nuts around Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, and one had to keep on the alert pretty well; however, if there was not much to lose there were ideas to be picked up to make a bit.

It used to make me weep to see some of the chaps

COMFORT ON A PITTANCE

arrive without any idea of doing anything. Into my office came a man one day. I had known him very well in England—he had been in Rothschild's at New Court. He had heard only two days before that I was there, but had been too diffident to approach me; he had slept out in the domain (park) the previous night. There was only one thing to do, to get him a supply of shirts and collars. Of course all his clothes had been done in at an hotel, the bill for which was too big for me to pay. Poor fellow, he died only a year or two ago and was able to do me one or two turns in after years for what I had managed for him. He was useful in the office, and thirty shillings a week gave him a margin of twelve shillings for pocket money, for I tell you, in those days, if a man was under the weather, he could get all the good food he wanted and a nice bedroom, baths and all, for eighteen shillings a week. It wasn't the place for big prices for living. An idea came that I would take a basement in connection with my advertising, to get ready the lantern slides in, and use as a store-room, and there were some merry times there. This was the resort when opened of some extraordinary characters. I used to let them come in and sit because some of these Englishmen had really nowhere to go and no money to spend. I didn't want them in the office upstairs. Midday I would send out for a loaf of bread, half a Dutch cheese and a bottle of pickles, and supply them with a couple of quarts of colonial beer. They liked it better than anything and somehow the fare seemed to appeal to them. Pocket-knives were pulled out to cut up the cheese and to fish in the bottle of pickles. There was the advantage, too, that the meal could be on for an indefinite period in case another "broke" happened to drop in. All of them were gentlemen.

FIRST MEETING WITH ROBERT SIEVIER

One night, just before I was leaving, Captain D., who had been in the "Blues," and belonged to a very old Scottish family, asked me if I would lend him the key, which I did. I happened to come in very early the next morning and there were two of the giants shaving themselves with water they had in an old kerosene tin. They had slept on some wooden shutters—it kept the cold off their backs at all events. Each had a toothbrush and had kept sixpence out of the money I had given the previous evening for clean collars. Yet one of these men who had slept on that hard bed in the cellar when he got his money would blossom out into one of the smartest of new chums. He had real good clothes, yet in the middle of the month everything would get pawned and there was no credit on occasions, even at the most moderate boarding houses. They got hold of a pair of boxing gloves and used to hit pretty hard. I don't know why I was the capitalist of the party, but I suppose it was the capacity for keeping up my corner, although the youngest of them all. The slightest sign of a bit of money in one of them would get all the others round him and I would miss the bunch for some days, but occasionally hear of their exploits in various directions after they had been "round the town."

When one or two dropped out others seemed to step in their places. Some would get a passage home and others make up their mind that they should "really get a job." One got a place as a marker at the Coffee Palace in Melbourne, and another went up somewhere in the New England district, also as a marker. It seemed a congenial occupation to them; they could smoke their pipes, keep themselves neat, have plenty to eat, a comfortable bed, use the hotel bathroom, and the players would ask them to have a drink. I put one

FRIENDS AS SERVANTS

or two on the Life Insurance stunt, which they worked for a time up-country with a buggy and pair and a doctor. One young fellow I introduced to a doctor I knew who had had some experience at the game and they went off together. I met them a few weeks later at a small up-country town. The younger one got the cases and the doctor examined them. He used to keep sober up to midday, but absolutely refused to take on an examination afterwards. Occasionally they would sleep out in the open; they had a camping fit-out with them, the doctor could make damper and billy tea—and whatever tasted better! They were happy, and were making money.

A man who brought me my hot water and cleaned my boots in a certain Australian hotel had once been the petted of his family at a home in England where I had frequently been a guest at dinner. He drank, yes, but was certainly not a drunkard. The doctor who had been up-country on the insurance jaunt had finished a tour and used to drop in to the cellar sometimes. He never seemed able to eat, and I don't think I ever saw him do so, but he always had spending money and would take the boys out. One week we saw him grow gradually fatter, and I was afraid that he was developing dropsy, his legs seemed such an abnormal size. He had been hard at it for over a week, and I could see he was verging on the jumps stage. One day I said to a mutual pal: "We must see about it," and in the evening of that day the landlord of the doctor's small hotel asked us to go round and see him. He was pretty bad, I can tell you, and we thought it better to undress him and get him to bed. But what a business! Pair after pair of trousers—he always wore dark blue. We peeled them off his legs, and did not ask for an explanation, but pointing to them he said with

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a mad chuckle : "What will keep the cold out will keep the heat out." It was the same, but to a less extent, with regard to his waistcoats. On the occasion of the trousers incident, I had to take my turn for an hour or two a day holding him down. He had every possible combination of d.t.'s—green beetles and red centipedes, in fact, the whole of the insect world, on his bed.

There was another doctor I met in Brisbane. He was a delightful fellow, only taking on the whisky at intervals. He had a most professional appearance, never out of his frock-coat or tall hat. Rather curiously he was very like that good fellow, Dr Taylor, the racing doctor, who used to be in attendance at the Park Meetings and died a year or two ago. It doesn't matter about the name of this Brisbane doctor. He had recently come out from England. I could see him walking about by himself on occasions, looking very sad, but there was no suggestion of this when he talked to me. "I think I have got a good job, old man," he said to me one day. "I am going up-country to take charge of a man's practice for eight or nine months; he's going to England to touch some money." He seemed cheered about it, although there was no suggestion that he was short and a job a necessity. After a drink I had to go round to the Theatre Royal; there was a band rehearsal and they were playing the waltz from *Olivette*. Nellie Stewart—so well known since in England—and Howard Vernon were to play in it. "That damned waltz," he muttered, but listened with his face transfigured: I never saw a man change so much. But when it was finished he touched my hand, saying: "For God's sake, let's have a big drink. I won't tell you the story now, but—that waltz!" A tear was in his eye when

EFFECT OF A WALTZ

he added : “ It’s a long story, and sacred to me while she lives.” He had to start the next morning, but was found in the river a few days afterwards. There was an open verdict. It wasn’t foul play. Whether it was an accident or the memories wrought up by that fateful melody—well !

CHAPTER XIV

LAYERS OF ALL SORTS

Bookmakers' Methods—Those we bet with—Backing a Treble—
Raking it in—Sliding the Aces—A Prize Mug—A Bout at Pyramids

WITH regard to members of the ring in Australia I have spoken about the Thompsons, Joe Marks and others. There was a great difference in the methods of many members of Tattersalls in Sydney and the Victoria Club in Melbourne. It was a simple pleasure having a wager with some, but we always knew there would be a win, tie or a wrangle with others. One of the most delightful men to do business with was poor Harry Haines. He would have winning sums done up in a little packet of notes with an elastic band round the lot. "I owe you fifty," he would say, handing over the little packet of ready, and add: "Thank you very much. Now I will have a glass of porter with you"—stout was always known as porter in my days. Another member of the Victoria Club in Melbourne would almost throw the money at us, saying: "It's lucky I can pay you." He would refuse a drink and even a cigar.

There was one man in Sydney who used to bet on the outskirts of the racecourse or in the cheap ring. He would work for some months at his own graft—he was a blacksmith—until he had put together about forty or fifty pounds. Then he would come into Sydney, give it a chance with the box or at cards; if it turned up right for him he would go about and make a book and live on the best till he got knocked for the whole of his bank-roll.

MY SPORTING EX-PARSON

I daresay several old Australians will remember him—Jack Austin. Old Joe Silberberg would have been over a hundred had he been alive to-day. I knew him when he had spent his best days; he had some good horses in training at one time. Alf Joseph was quite a stately figure; he was Mayor of Sandhurst, as I have already explained; he quite gave a stamp of ultra-respectability to the ring. Then in Melbourne there were the Barnards and S. G. Cook, who trained and owned horses. In Sydney there was "Glass-Eye" White, who never made much money, but looked quite a dandy. He was the husband of an Australian actress, Miss Emma Wangenheim, whose father kept an hotel in Sydney. Many on English racecourses know H. Oxenham. Five and twenty years ago, and even more recently, he succeeded Ned Jones as the biggest layer in New South Wales. He did business with everyone and then came over here, where the luck varied with him, but he won another big packet two or three years ago over a horse of his own. Up in Brisbane Billy Mooney had a very nice cigar shop with a little parlour behind, as usual, to play cards in; he had the only real book in the place. Nesbit, who played a very fine game of billiards, also established himself in Brisbane and laid horses, but on a lesser scale.

It was a strange experience in some of those early days to go to a small up-country meeting. There was one very minor affair I can remember quite distinctly. I happened to fall in with a man who had one or two horses; he had formerly been a Nonconformist minister. He spotted me at the principal hotel and asked me if I would smoke a cigar out in the bush with him, as he wanted to tell me something. He told me that he owned a horse named Hesitation, who could win the treble that day. At all events it was a certainty

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for the double, Handicap and Flying Stakes. I was to step in and get all the good offers I could. Straight out, double and treble for the principal handicaps—it was at Muswellbrook, where I have explained Frank Slavin came from. I went back to the hotel and found the little bunch making offers. It was about eleven o'clock in the morning. I backed Hesitation straight out at five to one, got a hundred to eight about the double, and twenty to one in some instances about the treble. They all thought that the principal race was a gift for a horse named Comet, owned by the Hon. John Eales, a man remarkable for having had his carriage drives laid with a shipload of gravel he imported from England so that he could walk on "British soil." Comet had once carried a butcher's boy round West Maitland in New South Wales, but was thoroughbred, and one day, being put in a race for hacks, won so easily that Mr Eales had him trained, and he figured very well in some important handicaps in Sydney and elsewhere. He seemed a certainty that day, but my friend, the ex-preacher, was very confident about his horse, Hesitation. Not to prolong the story, he won the treble. They were very sick when the settling came to be done that evening at the local hotel, where the stakes for the races were paid over. I received over six hundred pounds, two hundred of which was in cheques. I gave the ex-parson the two cheques and a hundred odd in ready. He demurred at the cheques, but I had begun to be wise. I might just as well have given him all the ready, for they got up a nice little game of blind hookey or banker for me that evening, and as I had bought wine I had all the undamped confidence of youth that I could run my luck, but they slid the aces for themselves, and I parted with score after score of pounds.

CUTTING ME UP

I may mention that before having the evening meal I had locked the first hundred up with the landlord. It was the first one handed to me for backing the double. Of course there was great mortification at seeing that money dribble away. They were so wonderful in their gentle treatment of a prize mug—JE! They flattered me all the while, saying what a wonderful punter I was, for they had been staggered a bit at the phenomenal luck that day over this horse, Hesitation. Any young gentleman who could do that could win the rest of their money. I dropped into it all right. I had never expected to win anything like the sum I had, so, confident that I had a hundred tucked away, the other was given a chance in the hope that I could add to it after all, yet all the time there was the sure intuition that I was being carved up like the biggest Michaelmas bird ever plucked. There was another mug present, but he only had small money. I punted a few pounds against him and won. In a short time I went into the bank again and they soon finished me off of all but one or two notes (pounds). I got up to call for a drink. "You're not going yet, young man," called out a hoary-headed old sinner. "Your luck will change; I've never seen anyone like you to have such a bad run." "You have got a lot more left," cried another. They had weighed me up to the ounce, and knew that I had won over three hundred and was keeping a bit back. "Now, just look in your pockets," insinuated another. "We'll give you a chance." I tell you it was difficult to leave them, but somehow, to my lasting credit, I managed to give them a miss for ten minutes and get to the billiard-room. They wanted to do the "box" on the green cloth table, but that didn't attract. At last I was challenged to pyramids, and was wise enough to

LAYERS OF ALL SORTS

ask for points. One in particular came out as a challenger. By a curious chance I had happened to see him playing one afternoon in Sydney. He gave me a ball and owed two, and then they tried to bet. I had to back myself for a trifle, and as it happened never played better, and the balls ran well for me. After a little while one or two who had my stuff began backing me with others in the room; at all events, I got away with about fourteen pounds, the sweetest money I ever won in my life, *and* the hundred of course.

CHAPTER XV

IN THE KELLY COUNTRY

Exploiting a Bush Town—Helpless Prospects—Question of Luck—
Backing a Hack—Where Ned Kelly had raided—Kelly Collections
—Besieging the Gang—Ned Kelly's End—Mike Fennelly's Tip

I WONDER if the stay-at-home Englishman ever realises what an "up-country town" signifies as regards size and importance. I had to be disillusioned. I had a scheme which I thought would soon be done to death in a big city; I therefore determined to exploit it in a smaller place. I had heard of a certain town in the Riverina district; this place had been impressed on my memory even before I emigrated, and as luck—or ill luck—would have it I fell in with several men who were always talking about this particular town. It did not enter my head to make more careful inquiries or to turn up statistics as to population. Preparations were made therefore for the journey. This could be managed almost entirely by train, except for a break of a few hours. It was an imposing move, with luggage, family, and others, and a cockatoo in a cage on the top of the luggage, which was English, well made, and fairly convincing had I desired it to be so. The scheme seemed to develop as I drew near my destination: five hours in the train to begin with; a night at a small station hotel on the border of two colonies, a short coach drive, and then on again by rail. At last, on a glorious morning in Australian winter, we arrived.

I deposited the luggage at the station, arranged for

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food for those with me at the railway buffet, and then started alone to look for apartments or a furnished house. Hope soon gave way to dismay—it was nothing but a glorified village. Of course an Australian township gains importance by there generally being two or three banks represented. It was soon obvious, however, that what I was looking for in the way of accommodation was quite out of the question. I recollect it was my first experience of a bush town. It was no good turning back, however, for surely something could be done in the place. Before long I had fixed up with a comfortable small hotel in the outskirts of the town. It was newly built, and the landlady gave us her own big sitting-room, in which there was a piano. The price agreed on was “all in” and cheap. We faced out on the bush across to the river, which, however, barely ran : it had been a dry season. In a brief space I had made friends with everyone who was to be known. The races were nearly due, and there was something to interest one in the preparation of several local horses ; but the place was hopeless to make a copper in. I held on in the hope that something would turn up, and even thought of starting a newspaper, but there was scarcely room for the weekly sheet printed there for which they charged a shilling. I was soon very “broke.” My brother went to Melbourne to arrange certain matters whereby those left behind, my family and myself, could be got out of pawn. At last came the welcome return of the envoy.

I think I was the only person sorry to leave. There had been a quietness and comfort about the place—a lack of hurry—and intimacy with real “bush,” with which I had been totally unacquainted. I could at last understand Adam Lindsay Gordon, also the

BACKING UP LUCK

troubles of pioneers and the difference between a good season and a bad one. My chief reason for describing all this is that by an extraordinary stroke of luck it was on the journey from that place that I met a man through whom things changed for the better in no time—a proof that you never know your luck. On the coach I ran across that good chap the late Mick Fennelly, who was then trainer for the Hon. James White, for a long time the most prominent Australian owner. A long day in a coach with meals at roadside houses threw me a great deal into the company of this burly and delightful companion. Certain theories I had about the two big handicaps due to be decided were upset by Fennelly, who took a kindly interest in me, and gave me two winners. If I had not left when I did I should not have met him. I took three hundred pounds to three pounds the double he gave me and was paid.

Ask Luigi at Romano's what luck means on occasions. I remember going in there once instead of over to Simpson's. I had determined not to have a bet, but he mentioned something rather convincingly and I telephoned a trifle. Up it rolled five minutes after at six to one. I should not have got the tip elsewhere, nor should I have had a bet. On the same day a curious thing happened to Luigi. The S. P. men he rang up wouldn't take fifty on a hot favourite from him, so he turned round and had a pony on an outsider, who popped up at a hundred to eight.

I have known many a man back the wrong number in the *pari-mutuel* through insufficient knowledge of a foreign language, and I have more than once taken more tickets on a horse for a place than to win, through absent-mindedness, and that horse has run second. Mr George R. Sims has made a joke about my surname

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being propitious to a new venture, and frequently I have had to think there is something in it. I remember once at a jumping meeting near Paris that a man asked me as a favour to put him five louis on a certain horse. I am quite sure that I did not mistake what he said and came back with the tickets and told him what I had done. Both he and his friends said I was wrong: I should have backed the favourite for him. He was not exactly nasty over it, but obviously thought that I had thrown his money away for him. I would take no denial, but went straight away and repaired the error, giving him his two fifty-franc tickets and being quite cheerful about keeping the others for myself. "It's all right now," I said; "isn't it?" "Thanks very much," he replied, "but I hardly like to stick you in with those others." Rather airily I cried: "Oh, five louis are neither here nor there. I've got a run for my money at all events." He suggested that as the mistake had been made he would take half the bet, but I would only let him stand in to the extent of twenty francs, at which he seemed relieved. The favourite fell at the second fence, two others ran out, and although No. 7 pecked badly at the last jump the late "Tuppenny" Wright pulled him together to get the run of a solitary opponent who had stuck to him all through. He paid two hundred and eighty francs for ten francs. Through my "mistake" the other chap won money, while I picked up a nice little bit by a fluke.

It was from the bush town in New South Wales I have just spoken of that I rode sixty miles to the Jerilderie Races—another small township, but attractive, as there was to be a gamble on a hack which had come over from my town to run in the hack race. He was really a thoroughbred hurdler, but came under

HOLDING UP A TOWN

the qualification of hacks because he had been used as a hack just before and had been *ridden to the meeting*. We could only get a few quid on him, and how they bellowed when parting; it was worse than the way the Belgian ring screamed when Alf Spalding and Billy Doyle won a parcel at Ostend a few years back over Ouadi Halfa. The ring had to pay, but my layers had to be coerced into parting—only about forty pounds.

At Jerilderie I slept in the room which had been the bank parlour when the Kellys stuck up the bank and the town about three or four years before. They all remembered the incident, and although it was a memory they were prepared for any other similar incident, which of course never happened. It was funny how the women extolled the bushrangers; I believe they would have subscribed to a monument to Ned Kelly. He was a man of iron nerve, and successfully out-manceuvred the police, and helped himself, when occasion demanded, at various places, following similar methods whenever he and his three "aides" went to transact business. There was something Gilbertian in the way they would clean up a branch bank. On one occasion they were credited with saying, like the Hebrew in the chestnut Jew story: "How much have you got?" when asked by the stuck-up manager: "How much overdraft do you want?" Before telling some other experiences about the Kellys, their raid on Jerilderie can be mentioned. One day nearly all the men had gone off to a big stock sale when Ned Kelly and his brother Dan, Steve Byrne and Hart cantered up the street. They soon had the hands of the bank clerk held up, and proceeding leisurely to round up all those in sight, women and two or three men, locked them all in the dining-room, while they

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helped themselves. They got away with a little over three thousand pounds in gold and small notes.

They had come across the border from Victoria into New South Wales, and made their way back to the Burrabogie Ranges. They had plenty of sympathisers in the district, and even the police had the greatest difficulty in getting any information. Some years before I was up at Euroa, in Victoria, and out of curiosity and a thirst for news—I was on a journalistic stunt—I asked different people whether there was any news lately about the Kellys. There was not even an evasive reply, but stony silence: such was the terror inspired. I couldn't get a word.

Ned Kelly was passionately fond of racing, and more than once came down from the ranges and went to a small meeting, sending a few pounds in to have a bet. They had plenty of friends, not one of whom dreamed of giving them away. I just missed by two or three hours the finish of the gang. It was the desire for revenge which led to their undoing. I know the hut well which they surrounded and called to a man who was thought to be an informer to come to the door as they wished to speak to him. Opening it, his form was outlined by the light inside, and he had three bullets in him straight away. His murder was soon known, and a big force of constabulary under Inspector Hare went there after them. It was known that all the lot were in the small hotel which nearly forty police surrounded a day or two afterwards. The verandah was barricaded and the windows boarded up. The shots from inside were so good that the police made no attempt to rush the building, but kept up a fusillade from a distance. Suddenly from behind them shots rang out, and Inspector Hare was wounded. A few of them wheeled round and saw a man in armour.

ARMED AND ARMOURED

He had a big iron nail can on his head, with eyelet holes, a ploughshare on his chest, and other bits on his legs. This was Ned Kelly, to whose credit it must be said he had not left his brother and pals in the lurch, but had come to do what he could. They fired at him, but the bullets were turned aside by his protective steel and iron. Then someone sang out: "Fire at his ankles!" and Kelly was soon down—no armour on him there. They captured him and continued to fire on the small building, which held out for such a time that actually a small field-piece had been telegraphed for to Melbourne. Eventually, however, there was no response: the three inside were dead. Ned was tried and hanged in Melbourne. It is possible that they all might have got away quite easily from their mountain quarters to the sea, and out of the country, had it not been for that murder in the hut. Bushranging practically died out with the Kellys.

CHAPTER XVI

LIFE IN BRISBANE

Gambling on Cricket—Visiting Companies—Nellie Stewart—Starting the *Era*—The Lost Two Hundred Pounds—My Contributions—Running Short

FROM the bush I went to Sydney, and with the money I had won there over Fennelly's tip started for the New England district and then went on to Queensland. It was in Brisbane that I first met Nat Gould, and I have seen him only once since. I explained the *pari-mutuel*, or Totalisator, to him and introduced him to the sports. He was on the *Telegraph* in the Queensland capital, but I lost sight of him soon after through leaving the city. It was quite a nice racecourse at Eagle Farm, and, when one or two big touring teams of cricketers came, the wicket used to be pitched in the middle of the racecourse; there was no other place available where gate-money could be charged. I met nearly all the big Australians from time to time, and also various English teams. The professionals used to have a rare good time. W. Barnes was specially popular. The test matches were the medium for enormous bets, and one race-horse owner, Mr A. F. Smart, whose colours were brown jacket and crimson cap, was credited with putting as much as five or six thousand pounds on a game. I've seen a man in a bar in Melbourne lay six hundred to four hundred pounds twice on a team; and yet he would not put more than twenty or thirty pounds on any horse race. Round at the Victoria Club there was big betting too. When some of the

THE CHAMPAGNE WELCOME

players were seen keeping it up pretty late at night the odds used to be affected somewhat, but I can say this: although there were hints of "inducements" there was not a single player, either amateur or professional, who ever considered the betting side of it at all.

A decent cricketer was always sure of a good job in either a bank or insurance company; so long as they could keep him in a colony they were always ready to look round and see what could be found for him. Not only that, but surely in no other country would cricketers have the latitude to go away for many months on one of the great tours. The surprise in Australia was the keen appreciation shown by women in the game. In the enormous crowd at the Association Ground in Sydney ninety per cent. of the girls and women could follow every point of the game most critically. In considering the recent rebuff alleged to have been given by the English cricketers in South Africa to a deputation, headed by a Mayor, who went to greet them, I can well appreciate the feelings of the local men. Whenever an intercolonial football or cricket team came to play in Queensland, it was customary to meet them at the wharf or station in carriages, whatever time of the day they arrived, and escort them to the leading hotel, where champagne was opened and short speeches made.

In Brisbane, after exploiting first the picture-on-the-wall business and bringing a good crowd round to see it every night, I revived the threepenny monthly pocket diary and time-table. It went pretty well, but at last, through getting in pretty heavily with the printer, I had to turn it over to him for a consideration, and then looked about for something at which a living could be made. We used to go into a place called the Australian, kept by Jordan. This was one

LIFE IN BRISBANE

of many sporting hotels in the place. All the racing division used to gather round, and on the eve of big races in Melbourne or Sydney we used to sell Calcutta Sweeps.

I lived a little way out, at Toowong, and used to hack into town and back two or three times a day. In white duck clothes, and the thermometer frequently at 108° in the shade, there was horse talk in the morning, and the perpetual smoking of Manilla cigars. I used to carry twenty or thirty in my pocket, and would light one from the cinders of another: I have read that Bismarck did the same. On occasions when driving I would stop my buggy and buy a couple of legs of mutton for half-a-crown or a three-pound sirloin of steak for a shilling. It was rare cheap living, but prices are now trebled, they tell me.

Many good theatrical companies came up there. Nellie Stewart, who was then about twenty, was the great star. She and Howard Vernon, who was a fine artist, used to appear in all the latest comic operas. Then the Holloways played the dramas first acted by Wilson and George Barrett in England, and we had a season of the *Silver King*, *Wages of Sin*, *Lights of London*, etc. There would be comic operas, Gilbert and Sullivan, by Lilliputians. They were wonderful children, and I assure you we got used to anything. Charles Turner, a brother of J. W. Turner, and his wife, Anna Montague, came with opera. With them was Giulio Verdi, who I have seen about London. Verdi was a very handsome chap. He sang in Italian and the others in English. I loved Brisbane; there was just that semi-tropical suggestion about it which made the place distinctive.

I got the idea of another paper and started—of

GIVING WINNERS

course with insufficient capital—a very nice little sheet called the *Era*, with the sub-title, *Queensland Sportsman and Licensed Victuallers' Gazette*. The subscription list was capital. It was four pages about the same size as the *Referee*, but printed on slightly better paper. I got hold of a firm of printers who turned it out very well considering what they had at their disposal. It was the time that Beach beat Hanlan on the Parramatta River, and having a good picture of the winner I got an artist to draw it. Oh, those days of crude reproduction! It was in this paper that I published my first turf fiction story, to be followed by so many since. I called it "Loved and Lost" and was not ashamed of it when reading it over some years afterwards. But what made the paper go so well was that the racing article gave so many winners. I knew all about the Tasmanian horses, and gave Blink Bonny for the Caulfield Cup. She started at a long price, and was a ready winner. Then they would buy my rag and follow me blindly, for there was an astonishing run of successes. I had for my "intercolonial" correspondent that well-known journalist Dicker Hamilton, who used to write under the *nom de plume* of "Tout Cela": the boys used to call it "Towt Selah"—it was as near as they could get. By the way, I nearly got put out by the husband of a young woman who was playing in comedy at the Theatre Royal. I forget what it was, but she was in the play a French adventuress, of sorts, and her attempts at French phrases were so astonishing that there had to be a humorous paragraph at her expense. Monsieur la mari took it very badly, and came round to my office in a very pugnacious mood. He had a friend with him, and I could see that both of them meant the worst. It was not convenient at the moment, in my nice white

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clothes; to be wiped the floor with. He alone might have been argued with, but his pal, I could see, looked as if he had a bit of a job on hand. It was an awkward moment, but the situation was saved by my suggesting that Madame should be sent for, and I would give her a pointer or two—for I stuck to my guns about the hopelessness of her pronunciation, and a box of cigars did the rest. I found that one could be merry to an extent, but not too much, at the expense of those in the limelight. It was a time, however, when it was judicious to please everyone, for it helped the advertising.

We used to play cards round at Nesbit's cigar shop close to the theatre, and one night there was an eighteen-hour sitting. One new-comer lost a lot, and as he didn't settle we looked for him the next afternoon. He arrived about three o'clock, with the story that he had been robbed of nearly two hundred pounds in gold out of his silk coat pocket. We all believed him to begin with, until Nesbit sent round to the bank to know the exact weight that amount of gold would come to. Then Nesbit got a little canvas bag and filled it with the exact weight of silver coins. One after the other we tried on Nesbit's silk coat, and then and there declared that the cove who alleged he had been robbed was a liar. Of course we settled ourselves down to the thought that each had made a bad debt; he owed each of us a bit. There were always little odd cases cropping up like that: tramps that passed in the night. They would come into the town for a while, spend a bit of money, do a lot of hand-shaking, tell the tale and, astonishing to relate, we would all tumble into it and believe in them. Sometimes they would get busy with cheques on a distant colony, and it would come off frequently. The Australian is the toughest possible

G. E. PALMER AS HE WAS

in knowing everything, yet at the same time can be very gullible.

There was a very fine amateur runner there, Pritchard, who was in the Queensland Bank, a most beautifully made athlete, but George Bonnor, the cricketer, managed to give him three yards in a hundred and beat him. Arthur Forbes, who came over to London after for the same bank, looked after the big cricket fixtures. His brother, Duncan Forbes, was dotty about cricket. He came round and asked me if he could do the cricket article in my paper. As he said he would do it for nothing, there was a ready assent, and it was delightful stuff, but thoroughly mad. He couldn't allude to Palmer as Palmer, but had to preface his man's name with a glorifying adjective, and then give his full name. Palmer, who was one of the best bowlers who ever played for Australia, had just done something big, and the copy read: "Magnificent George Eugene Palmer, you have shown them, superb George Eugene, how you can Palmerise the defence, etc., etc." The fun was to put it in just as it was written.

The *Era* went on for many weeks, I may say improving all the time, but finances ran low and there was a bill at the printers. I hustled round, and at last induced a dear old financier to give it a leg up with three hundred pounds, and it is astonishing how far this went. But then again came a time of difficulty, and I owed the printers about two hundred and fifty pounds, a lot of money considering the circulation was only five thousand—at threepence, mind you. One day, as I failed to weigh in, they said they must really stop. The three of them lined up and gave me the ultimatum. I saw they were in earnest, and a ready "bright" struck me and I said: "Don't miss your

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opportunity, boys: don't let the paper stop. Give me a small salary and go and raise the money and run it yourselves." I knew they were wedded to the idea, and they looked at each other. I twigged that they jumped, and told them that I had to go over to Jordan's bar for a few minutes, but would come back for their answer. I added that I would get them plenty of "ads.," and they could give me commission on these. It materialised all right, and I really tried my best for them until a family matter brought me to England. Afterwards I heard that they had found a real solid financier, and the paper flourished under a different title, which incorporated the old title. .

CHAPTER XVII

IN WINDJAMMERS

The Morose Captain—Onions and Music—The Flageolet and Dirges—
“Dead March” on the Poop

WHAT do you think of a five months' trip? That was my experience from Australia to England—leaving in January, the arrival in London was in June. A pretty tall order, nearly one hundred and fifty days. I had several trips in sailing ships prior to this and altogether have spent nearly two years of my life in windjammers. At one time I knew everything there was to know, and really believe that, had I served my time on my trips I could have got a mate's certificate. As a boy I hated the sea; I would get sick in a row-boat, and be violently ill on a moderate trip to Felixstowe via Harwich by the *Queen of the Orwell* or the *Queen of the Thames*, which were the two boats plying in my youth. We had a house at this Suffolk seaside resort, which was a very small place in those days. However, constant travelling at sea made it more attractive, and many are the trips I can look back to and remember every incident of. I have met skippers and mates of all kinds, and as those sea trips were incidental to the period I am writing about they crowd themselves into my memory at the moment.

On one of my passages I quite educated the captain and the three mates in the mysteries of racing, and most probably there has been something to answer for in reference to this. The skipper had never been on a racecourse in his life. He was a decent soul, and

IN WINDJAMMERS

when he got tired of reading penny novelettes, of which he had a vast store, he would beg me to sit down and tell him tales—true and fictitious. It was pardonable to romance a little, as embellishments appealed more to his lay mind than absolutely truthful impressions. The amount of thousands I talked about were never contained in the richest Spanish galleon which roved the main. He would sit open-mouthed and listen to it all. Of course I instilled a certain amount of love interest into some of the stories. At last the good fellow thought he might give up the sea and take a farm if he could always know where to find me.

There was only one occasion really when I could not find anyone to talk sport ; that also was at sea, after a three weeks' trip I had from Newcastle, N.S.W., to Rockhampton, Queensland. A little broken in health, I was induced to go in a certain sailing barque, the captain of which owned her. She was nicely found, and I had a comfortable cabin, which I viewed two days before I sailed. Captain M. was a north of Ireland man. I went on board. We were towed out of the harbour and off we went. The weather was ideal ; we never had a rough day the whole time, and the breeze never got us beyond seven knots. On having the first meal with him the reek of onions in the "saloon" was so terrible that I had to gasp for breath ; however, the opening of the skylights, to an extent, modified this. I shall never forget that odour of onions as long as I live, not the cooked article, for the galley was thirty feet right away for'ard. I had discovered that he had filled his spare cabins—I was the only passenger—with sacks of onions, which he was taking up as part of his private spec. to our destination. I will pass over little instances such as giant cockroaches—quite harmless, but disconcerting

CORRUPTING A SHIP'S COMPANY

—which crawled over my face at night until at last I begged to be allowed to take my mattress on the cabin table. Still, I preferred the cockroaches to the onions, which is saying something.

My captain was a most misanthropic man. He had retired from the sea many years before, but having lost his wife had bought this five-hundred-ton barque and was running her as a distraction and to get interest on his savings. Highly religious, his morose state seemed to accentuate it. I was soon cured of mentioning sport. He asked me not to leave the novels which I had in my possession about, as the steward's morals were questionable, and the skipper had doubts of him. But the climax was reached when I had to turn musician to entertain my seafaring host. In my early youth, I must explain, I had a very highly finished flageolet given to me. I annoyed my family then intensely by practising on it, but after a bit it became less of a curse, because melodies with very few false notes were drawn from it. By an extraordinary coincidence, after never having touched that refined pipe for years, I spied one of a very similar type in a music shop before leaving Newcastle, N.S.W. In a weak moment I bought it. I thought to myself it would be a distraction to go to the fo'e'sle head and be a bit of an Orpheus at six seven; but my well-meant amusement was interrupted one dark evening by the stealthy tread of the captain.

My chief repertoire consisted of airs from *Les Cloches de Corneville* and *La Mascotte*, which were the vogue, and always bring up haunting memories of salad days. On the approach of the captain I had voluntarily altered my melody to "The Lost Chord," followed by "The Village Blacksmith," both of which I expected he knew. He asked me to play them over again. It

IN WINDJAMMERS

was very funny, but the climax was reached one Sunday evening, in a beautiful semi-tropical atmosphere, when there was barely steering way on the barque. The sails were flapping with the gentle roll of the ship, and the swish of the water against the sides made music for those who are accustomed to it. I must explain that, although he had a vast quantity of spirits in the lazaret he was a teetotaller, and I had great difficulty in getting him to disgorge two bottles of whisky to me. The prospect was not cheering, as we were still some days from our destination, even with luck. He came up to me and said: "Do fetch your clarionet." It was not worth while correcting him regarding the real name of the instrument; perhaps he was flattering me. There and then I fetched the reed, which would have been torture to ninety-nine people out of a hundred. It was Sunday evening, as I have said, and what to play was the trouble. Happy thought!—"Abide with Me," and, mind you, although having been through years of environment with the tough side of life the old melody brings back early pictures. I managed somehow to put in a very pathetic note that evening, and although I have tried since I have never been able to get the same effect. I cannot think that it was an aural delusion, for it sounded good even to me. The skipper walked away, and I saw he was crying; and I offered dumb sympathy, but he resented this, as he thoroughly enjoyed his grief.

After this came the comedy of the whole business. I mentioned one or two bits which he might like to hear, but he shook his head and said to me: "As a favour, I want you to play me the 'Dead March.'" It nearly took my breath away. To play the "Dead March"—from *Saul*, presumably—on the flageolet, which is,

SPITTING OUT BAGPIPE EFFECT

after all, little removed from a penny whistle if you play it staccato! I asserted that it was practically impossible to give any rendering of Handel's gloomy masterpiece, but he became so insistent that I had a go. How to get it sufficiently sonorous was a licker, but by means of a sort of droning to myself and spitting down the pipe I got as near as possible to an imitation of the bagpipes, and over the still waters, with the man in the moon laughing at me and the man at the wheel thinking us mad, and the Belfast skipper listening intently, the "Dead March" was played, under circumstances which, I should think, have never before existed in the world, or are ever likely to. I am not writing this to make you laugh, and I am not romancing.

CHAPTER XVIII

A FIVE MONTHS' TRIP

Sight of Cape Horn—Teaching Card Games—Run out of Grog—Last Bottle of Brandy—Medical Comforts—Stocked up again—The Mate and the Pig—Sharks' Supper

THE five months' trip I have mentioned from Australia to England was in a barque called the *Scottish Prince*. She was well found enough, the cabins being comfortable, with a good bathroom. One of my sons—then a little chap of two and a half—had not been very robust (look at him now, you who go racing, with his six feet and fifteen stone, and you will hardly believe it). I decided therefore to go by sail; one thing, it was cheaper; and there was nothing in particular to be in a violent hurry for. It was all right after the first few days, and later there was the usual experience of having a magnificent view of Cape Horn. Few have been round it, and only a small proportion of those have seen that wonderful coast-line, the extreme south of South America. It made a great impression on me, I can remember, but what a delight to steer a northern course again, for we had been down to nearly 60° south, and, my! it was cold. There were only two passengers besides my family—a Scotsman, who had been in the army, and who kept himself to his books, and a Dutchman, a resident of Sydney. The skipper was a simple soul who delighted in reading. I had two packs of cards with me, and he had two or three as well. He carried them as he did a big American organ, in case they "might be wanted." He was over fifty, and had

BEGINNER'S DELIGHT

never learned a card game in his life ; in fact, I should say he had never played a game of any kind.

He was dying to learn the "broads," and his first request was made when we had just missed the "trades," and were in the doldrums. It was pleasant then in the morning. I used to go up on the poop before my bath, in my pyjamas and dressing-gown, and have a look round, and then went below to dress and have breakfast. I left the latter till as late as possible, as I knew, if only an hour and a half intervened to luncheon-time, I could get out of the card instruction. A little after eleven, of course, there was the function of preparing to take the sun. Armed with an old sextant, which I had borrowed from the bo's'n, who held a mate's certificate, I used to work out the latitude. I never got so far as managing the longitude. After we had "made it so" there was an adjournment for a tot of brandy each. We used to enjoy this little conviviality before our dinner at one o'clock. Directly the meal was over, however, the skipper would ask me to his cabin, and we used to sit down with packs of cards before us.

I would not play for money, as he had not even an elementary knowledge of games. The great thing at first was to get him to learn the face value of the cards. He was always mixing up the jacks with the kings, and he never knew the relative value of the ace. I puzzled my head as to the best way to impress this on him, and decided to go back to childhood and teach him "Beggar my Neighbour." His delight was stupendous. He would roar with laughter when he got all the cards from me, and go to the locker and pour out two "second-mate's nips," which we would drink before going on. I thought that the next step should be euchre, but I gave this up in despair after the first

A FIVE MONTHS' TRIP

hand. He could not understand that right and left bower represented by jacks could be more valuable than the ace. I could see that I would have to teach him all over again if I started with euchre straight away. Cribbage was too complicated, and my superiority at German whist was too heavy; piquet is a game for the advanced. Thereupon I invented a sort of whist, with twenty-six cards in each hand—that is, we did not put a dummy on the table, as he could not understand partners. He was such a good fellow, and would take a real childish delight in my instructions, and if he could win a hand at this fearful and wonderful game, which I can claim as my own, he would jolly me no end, and tell the mate at dinner. I am quite sure the mate professed a profound contempt for cards, which he could play, I discovered, but he would never confess it to the skipper. He may have feared instruction.

One day, when there was just a smack of autumn in the air, and we were about 30° north, and getting into colder latitudes, he said to me: "We shall have to go light with that brandy. I have only got two more bottles left." "Then we will go on with whisky." "Haven't got any left," he replied. "I thought perhaps you would bring your own." "And I relied on you," was my reproof.

The horrible discovery was made that, with the exception of a few bottles of "square-face" (Dutch gin), we had finished everything in the liquor line, but we had taken many weeks to do so. It was agreed that we should tackle the hollands straight away; and it is not a bad drink at sea. In the course of a week or so this disappeared, and he said to me, after we had gone minus a peg up till supper-time: "Don't you think one bottle of brandy would be sufficient to keep

WANTED : A "DUTCHMAN"

for medical comforts?" I agreed that it would, and we had a "conviviality." When this bottle had gone we had a very dull time for two days on tea, coffee and ship's lime-juice. It was one Sunday morning. We had got a nice ten-knot breeze about two points abaft the beam with everything drawing; he should have been going twelve, but was flying light and not too clean, having been in harbour for five months.

"She worries me a bit; as she don't steer well with all this grass on her." I myself had noticed this during one or two bits of bad weather. "If they would only spend a bit dry-docking the ships," he added, "they would save a bit in wages, wouldn't they?" I could see that he was not himself. He was not smoking, and I had followed his example and we had both got a bit off the plug in our teeth. Looking over the rail to leeward he said to me:

"How much do you think she is doing?"

"About eight," I replied. (I have explained that I have had many a long voyage—unprofessionally.) We walked over to the weather rail on the poop and had a look round in the apparently aimless way one does at sea. "What are the chances of getting some liquor?" I asked.

"Perhaps we shall fall in with a Dutchman," he said, "and get some more Schnapps."

"Are you sure there is only one bottle of brandy?" I asked him.

"Quite," he replied; "and I have locked up that in the medicine chest."

"You don't look very well, Captain," I began. "There is a sort of something about you, as if a little quinine would do you good. You look pale. Did you eat anything at breakfast that tasted funny? I didn't touch that dry hash myself?" I added insinuatingly.

A FIVE MONTHS' TRIP

"Don't look well?" he asked, rather startled. "Well, to tell you the truth I don't feel quite up to the mark. Can't make it out quite. I don't sleep well."

"Let me look at your tongue." I held my hands up in assumed horror. "Stomach out of order, Captain, I think. Do you feel a pain in your side at all?"

"Well, now I come to think of it," he agreed, "I do feel rather funny just here," and he slapped the side where the liver isn't.

"You don't think there is a case of anything which has been overlooked in the lazaret?" I went on.

"Not a chance."

"Is there anything in those bottles in the medicine chest from which we could make you up a draught?" was my further suggestion.

"I will only trust castor oil out of that chest," he said. "Of course the hands can have what they like."

We both laughed, for two or three old shell-backs used to come aft every Saturday night for a dose; it is a common practice of that type. The captain would not let them take it for'ard, but made them drink it on the spot.

"The last bottle is in the chest, isn't it?" I half whispered, sidling up to him.

"Yes; you saw me put it away."

"I suppose nobody has wanted it since we put it there? Isn't it a horrible day, Sunday, without a drink?" I murmured, as if to myself, pretending that it was only a soliloquy and that he was miles away.

"Beastly."

"Then why don't we have one?" I suggested.

"Oh, but it's the last bottle."

"I have had a look at the hands," I went on, "and

LUCK AT LAST

they look all right; and I believe those two old passengers have a drop of their own tucked away somewhere. They never ask to have one with us, and as for one of them, I believe the little fellow has a prejudice against liquor; he wears a bright blue tie, and I shouldn't be a bit surprised if he wears a bit of ribbon ashore." That settled him, and we went down the companion to the break of the poop, had a look round at the grey sky, and went through the cabin to the captain's quarters, right in the stern of the ship.

It was the work of no time to unlock the chest and get out the bottle. We agreed, before we started to open it, to have two tots each, and then put the cork back and a bit of sailcloth round it. We shook hands and swore that neither of us would touch it under any circumstances unless it was a case of serious illness. Surely neither Hennessy nor Martell ever dreamed of the pleasure two stiff pegs of cognac would give to two weather-beaten voyagers. We lingered long over the first, and the second we took in sips, breathed it out, inhaled it, sniffed it, and then sniffed again; it was nectar. I congratulated the skipper on his altered appearance, and we were very jocose.

We fell in with a homeward-bounder, who wanted some bread (biscuit). It was a desperate feeling that want of grog. It was not the quantity we wished to have, for we were both moderate-drinking men (don't laugh), but the lack of it on occasions was woeful. The other skipper signalled to us asking if we would go on board and have luncheon. What a break it was to step on another deck! It seemed like running over to Paris. He was well found in every way, having quantities of good flour, which we lacked, but he was short of biscuit for the hands. He sold our skipper jam and pickles as well, and to me personally a case of

A FIVE MONTHS' TRIP

fifteen bottles of hollands, half-a-dozen bottles of rum, and three or four bottles of brandy. What was the greatest boon, however, was the exchange of all the books we had read for the big pile his ship had finished with. What a delight it was to get bread the next day which was not sour! The cook had previously tried to fake up ours with potatoes and what-not, but it was no good, and as he was such a good baker it was quite lamentable.

Our menus had been lacking, the sheep and chickens had all gone long before, and we were down to the last pig. He had been shipped as a porker from the East India Docks about twelve months before, and had grown enormously. The mate, a good fellow named Knowles, who by the way was never happy unless nursing my second boy, the present "Scout" of the *Express*, then a little tiny chap, had an affectionate regard for the pig, and would fill his pockets with biscuits from the cabin table and go for'ard and feed the monster himself. He would come up to me asking under his breath: "Have you seen him to-day?" and I had to give a fitting reply. Sometimes when we were walking up and down the weather side of the poop during one of the night watches he would suddenly stop and say: "I have never seen a pig grow like he has. Isn't he really wonderful?" I am certain he dreamt about it. Some mornings I couldn't escape, and had to watch the process of feeding. The pig knew him as well as a dog would have, for there is great intelligence in pigs. So it went on, the daily talk. We were beginning to get out of the tropics, and one afternoon we had a fine slant of wind and the weather was getting perceptibly cooler. Before supper the wind had increased from an eight to a ten knot breeze, and there was every prospect of it continuing. A light overcoat

TRAGEDY OF "DENNIS"

was a comfort that evening ; our course was due north. During the first watch I had passed the mate once or twice, but he seemed preoccupied and waved me aside, as if he was working out some abstruse mathematical problem. Suddenly he stopped in front of me ; looked round to see if there could be anyone to hear us, then pulling my ear down to his mouth whispered : "*We're going to kill Dennis to-morrow !*" and then hauled off to note my surprise and delight. I had to say "how splendid !" a dozen times before turning in. There was a loin of fresh pork on the table the next day. The mate was the first at the table, but I wasn't slow either ; and what a treat ! The trotters and kidneys were kept as a luxury for my wife and eldest son—who is well known in Press circles, especially on cricket grounds and at billiard matches—and another loin was put aside for next day. The rest went into a harness cask to pickle, and then was going to be smoked, to last a few weeks. But alas for that wonderful forecast of the weather ! The breeze fell away till there was hardly steerage way, the sun shone down hotter than ever. The remains of "Denis" in the cask began to niff a bit, and the sharks had a good feed.

Poor Knowles, the mate, was lost a year or two after in going off in a boat to pick up a man overboard, and the ship was wrecked a few years later off Queensland.

CHAPTER XIX

TWO SEA INCIDENTS

In the South Seas—Recruiting Kanakas—Missed their Islands—The Coveted Winchester—Curing a fleeced Gambler—A Slight Gain makes Cheerful

A TRIP to the South Seas in a labour schooner from Queensland was a wonderful experience. It was the system in those days to recruit Kanakas from the islands to work the sugar plantations in Central Queensland. A lot of restrictive legislation has since been put on this, but though there were strict regulations which were supposed to be followed as regards "recruiting" the islanders, and a "Government agent" was put on board each labour schooner to see fair play, this was frequently a terrible farce on account of the curious choice made in some of those representing the benevolent Government. As a rule, the skipper had only to be agreeable for a day or two, and let the Government man have a free supply of whisky, to ensure a free hand in whatever he did. There was an interpreter, also, who was supposed to be able to translate all the lingo of the various islands, but things went on in a pretty haphazard way on the outward journey. There would always be a certain number of returned labourers—that is, those who had worked their three years. They were well fed and housed during that time, and as far as I recollect had thirty pounds to receive at the end of their term. It was not plain sailing returning thirty or forty Kanakas to their homes. It was easy in the cases

STICKING TO THEIR GUNS

where a batch of seven or eight came from the same island. They would soon become excited as they drew near home, and put their odds and ends into a bundle preparatory to being put ashore. It was not a walk-over to recruit others at the time of their landing, for as a rule the particular villages they struck would be too busy trying to deprive the new-comers of their possessions. The women would drag everything from them, even the bargains in soldiers' caps and coats they had bought, but there was one thing which no Kanaka would ever part with—his gun. The majority affected rifles, but some had muzzle-loading sporting guns of old patterns; others owned revolvers and what not. These they would fight to retain possession of if necessary, but there seemed to be an unwritten sort of code of honour which prevented even the chief from trying to get possession of them unjustly.

There was little delay after these returned labourers were put ashore, and the captain would endeavour to discover the homes of others; this was frequently impossible. The poor devils would try to explain, and even draw rough charts; certainly there were most difficult situations. It only remained, therefore, for our skipper to do as many others had done before, and that was to chance the men's destinations. He would say: "They're as bad as drunks trying to explain to cabmen where they live." Perhaps the glass was falling, perhaps the skipper was thinking of the waste of time. At all events, whatever the cause, he would resort to drastic measures. Eventually the last batch of coloured humanity would be dumped down on the nearest island. Perhaps there were no inhabitants in sight when they landed, and fortunately he would not know exactly what would happen, but I can assure you that when I became more enlightened

TWO SEA INCIDENTS

I more than half suspected that these wretched labourers might have been dumped on an island inhabited by a tribe with a perpetual feud against theirs. What would happen? Well, we need not try to imagine; maybe they would rub noses with their life-long enemies, or be assimilated in the interiors of the natives; in those days cannibalism had not wholly died out. Incidentally, there was one huge fellow on a certain island who, I was told, used to put the eye of a gourmand on me. I certainly didn't like his look. He was fat enough to induce me to believe the stories told about him that he had been known to devour—but it isn't a pleasant recollection. That spear of his always looked too handy for me.

I should mention perhaps that the "trade boat" used to go in—followed by the covering boat, in which were armed men—and explain to the chiefs the mission. Presents of cheap rubbish would be lavished on them; and they would either give their permission or refuse it for men of their tribes to be recruited. The natives heard rose-coloured stories about the "engagements"; the enlightenment came later. They were pretty well treated, however, when once they had made a compact in the presence of the Government agent. Kidnapping, real "blackbirding," was done, but I can never recollect it in our schooner. I remember one man, the mate—a very powerful north of England man—had been casting longing eyes on a Winchester repeater possessed by a nigger on an island on which we had been spending two days. All offers of tobacco, clasp knives and money had proved useless. As the difficulty of possessing that Winchester increased, so did the mate's longing grow keener.

"I am going to have another go at him to-night," he said. "I have arranged that he shall bring a

A "SCRAP" FOR A RIFLE

couple of recruits alongside when we row off. The chief won't let 'em go, but they are doing a guy out of camp, and we are going to pick them up."

"He is not coming too?" I asked.

"No, I have promised him half-a-dozen sticks of tobacco for seeing that the others come."

Well, later, the boat returned with the two recruits, and the mate had the Winchester repeater; I puzzled for a long time how he got it. He told me that he had done a barter for it, and kept up the story. I noticed for a few days, however, that he kept his hand slung in his coat; he told me that he had a touch of rheumatism. One day when I saw him with his trousers rolled up, on the wet deck, I noticed a badly contused wound showing on his leg; his hand too was bandaged. He said: "You may as well know. I had a bit of an argument with that nigger about the gun. He would not see it the way I did." This, paraphrased, meant that he had pinched the weapon after a scrap. No wonder that punitive expeditions are necessary when the nigger is occasionally wishful to get a little of his own back from the white man. However, the recruits were very happy as a rule, and it was a pity to see the sugar industry in Queensland languish through insufficient labour. New communities have lacked prosperity by being too nice in their moral code.

I want to tell you one more sea experience, about a man who came up from the south to Queensland, did his business, collected nearly a thousand of his own money, and then did it in at the box. I was on a steamer, starting from Rockhampton, on a delightful morning, the sun blazing aloft, all the brass-work so hot that we could not put our hands on it, the awning spread, and the passengers, about a dozen, were

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arranging their deck-chairs, and getting out their books. I had a peg of whisky with the captain and asked him who was on board.

“Absolutely no one I know,” he said. “I don’t think one of them has travelled with me since I have been on the coast, and, as you know, I have been up and down with the two companies for nearly twenty-five years. Just have a look,” he added confidentially; “if you know anyone, when we get to Maryborough this evening we might have a rubber of whist.” I must explain that we were due to arrive at this port about seven o’clock in the evening, and tie up until about eleven o’clock next day, so as to take off a few tons of cargo and take on board some odd boxes of fruit, etc. I went for’ard and had a good look at the steerage passengers, giving a Manilla each to a few Chinamen. Walking aft again, I saw a man coming up the companion-way whom I had seen about in the town we had just left; he had been there a few days on business, and was the man who had lost over nine hundred pounds. I knew that he had taken his losses very much to heart. Whether the game had been on the level it is not necessary to consider, but the fact is that he had weighed out six hundred pounds ready, and was owing another three hundred, and I was quite sure that those who had won it would see that he paid it if ingenuity went for anything. I had never spoken to him before, but two men soon fraternise at sea, even though they may be total strangers. “Nice morning,” I said to him. “We shall have a lovely passage as far as Maryborough at all events.” “Is it a nice morning?” he said. “I haven’t seen it.”

He was not surly, but had a vacant look in his face which would have caused one to think that he was doped; in fact, I came to the conclusion that he had

CURING A LOSER

been taking drugs. All these theories, however, were wrong. Presently he was joined by a man he evidently knew very well, and a sort of informal introduction took place which was quite amusing, considering that I had spoken to No. 1 sportsman for about two minutes only. I suggested a drink, which was readily accepted by No. 2, but the brooding gambler waved us away saying: "No, I'll stay up here," and walked away. "Make him come down," said his friend, but I was diffident about being too pressing, and so the two of us went down to the saloon. "What's the matter with him?" I asked. "Oh, he's in a terrible fix," replied his friend. "I only came across him yesterday; I have known him for years, we do business together. But do you know what has happened? He's lost hundreds of pounds. He had given up gambling for a long time, sticking to his business like a good 'un. I don't believe he'll ever get over it, and I hardly like leaving him now. He'll go dotty, I think, brooding over his losses. He's only recently got married, and now all the care of two or three years has gone wrong. We had better go up," added the friend. "You don't know what he'll do; he might jump overboard."

"Oh, he won't do that till this evening, even if he meditates it: it is too fine a day. Now, if the wind was howling, and the sea lumpy, he might go over the rail," I said. We went on deck again, and I told the friend to leave me with him for a few minutes. I soon had the story out of him. It did not seem to do him much good, and I think I was wrong for once, for he seemed to get worse and worse during the recital. I must add that I had been up against trouble many a time, and knew what it meant to wake up in the morning and remember an ill-spent night when left

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with empty pockets and a lot owing on the cuff. That fatal pencil should never be allowed at any gambling game. Suddenly I struck a bright. I went to his friend. "Look here," I said, "that man is in a terrible state; something will have to be done to restore his mental balance. I think I can do it, but it may cost me five or ten pounds to accomplish it. Do you feel inclined to stand the racket? I do not wish to explain what I mean: but is that good enough?"

The good chap I was talking to told me that he would give double and treble the sum to pull the man right again. He would get it back somehow. "Very well, then," I said, "we'll see what can be done." We rejoined the misery in a few minutes, and I lighted a fresh cheroot and said: "Oh, by the by, when we get to Maryborough this evening, the captain suggests a rubber of whist." I could see that the bait was a good one, and immediately the face of the "lost one" showed intelligence, but he relapsed into his gloom the next second. "It will be no good to me," he replied. "I should have to sit still the whole evening, and there would not be five shillings' difference between us." "Oh, well, we'll see about that," I added. "What do you say to a game of German whist now? It will pass the time." At last he agreed. I played as badly as I could, but not so badly as to give myself away. He began winning, and was transformed when he had pouched the first fiver. He actually laughed when this was raised to seven pounds, and ordered a bottle when I had dropped ten and the luncheon bell rang. The man was quite himself again, just that few pounds had done it; the luck had changed. Don't you see? He was a man once more. It only cost a tenner—at his friend's expense.

CHAPTER XX

THE RETURN TO ENGLAND

A Job a Must—Making myself Necessary—Pushing my Wares—In the Big Cities—Bluff Players I sat down with

FLUMPED back in London after years abroad : a family ; no job, and only a tenner in the wide. A paternal roof to go to for a while, but the certain knowledge that, while there was the full welcome, the stay could not, from motives of finance—parents up against it—be too prolonged. After so many months at sea it seemed strange to tread on pavements : the din of the streets distracted me, and I used to rush into the by-streets to get a rest. But the shops, how attractive ! Yet, ah ! the lack of splosh. I saw a million things I wanted, but couldn't buy. I was all right for clothes, and soon got rigged out in up-to-date suits, which made me look less like a cowpuncher. A beard too had to be removed—with regret. I hadn't tasted soles for years, nor lobsters, nor salmon, and found myself buying one or the other and presenting them to the home ; but they cost money. Two or three days and I began to look about. Newspaper offices didn't seem to want me : letters of regret all round and the cold shoulder on calling in Fleet Street. So the *Telegraph* "situations vacant" had to be studied. Nothing offered itself for a day or two, but—at last ! I called on a firm of leather goods makers ; the job had gone ! Somehow I had an idea that I was necessary in that place, and asked them what trade they did with " *my* country," Australia, and had the

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answer: "Practically nothing." That's where my chance came in. They should have a big trade out there, I convinced them. I have mentioned that when, many years before, I was with Mr Tegg in the publishing business he thought he might "mix it," and dabbled in albums, purses and other things. I had learnt the difference between morocco, calf, russia and other leathers. This was useful.

The salary in the new job was so small that there was a bit of diffidence in telling my father how much it was; still, there was a good commission in sight. I hustled round and got hold of a few good Australian houses, and convinced them that I had the stuff they could sell—I knew the colonial taste. It began to move, and a living was soon an accomplished fact. It was the beginning of a long run and the knowledge of a phase of a big manufacturing business.

Step by step the position was improved, and there was deep satisfaction at being the inventor of new designs, styles, etc. All this time I was in touch with publications, but only to keep my hand in. Changes took place, and with the retiring of the late Moritz Wolfsky from the firm he founded in Tudor Street I was a necessity to keep the show going, in that big place, with a great business. It was strange that some years later I should go within a stone's-throw to the *Daily Express* in the same street.

I have loved business, yet I have hated it. The delight of new designs and ideas is like the planning of a new feature in a newspaper. I liked the staff and the opportunity for holidays. A bank holiday was a vacation, not an extra busy day, and Sunday was a rest cure, not a nightmare, as it has been occasionally. In Paris, later, it was my busiest day, and on a daily paper it has been hard labour; yet I hate business for

“ ON TOUR ”

its narrow prejudices and for having on occasions to kowtow to those we despise.

We had a palace of a factory, and there were rich things stored in it: plenty of scope for the artistic taste. There were some nice boys in the place too, several young fellows who had put money into the show. It was a big task for me to take on the biggest cities of the kingdom and keep the trade, but I knew the business by heart, and perhaps there may be others who can testify that the trade done was the best ever. I travelled a ton and a packer-valet—an old soldier who soon got into my ways and I into his “old soldier” habits. It was comfortable, however, although not luxurious. He would “open up” for me in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Manchester or elsewhere, and I would arrive and steer the best men to see the stuff. The results were sometimes delightful, and as I had a good commission, expenses, etc., there was always a good weekly cheque. I am only telling this as an episode of a career, and more to mention certain incidents of travelling days, which were interesting.

I was not bound down with restrictions, but had a free hand—which was the only way to send a man as what we will call, in a hackneyed way, “an ambassador.” Several times I had a go to break away from it—back to journalism—but somehow the old idea would become uppermost that it was “easier to make a living in the thing you are in than what you are not in,” and I would put out of my mind any change, for the moment.

Well, on we go! The chief delights were an occasional day's racing, the daily wire to back something, and the card-party in the evening. Several times recently, when racing, I have run across a few of the same old crowd I used to play bluff with years

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ago, and they have the same tastes, but do not sit up quite so late as we did twenty years ago. Many have retired or changed their business. Everyone drifts—but if they go several ways there are many pleasant reminiscences.

There were some good fellows met in the course of the years. Bertie Marks, in the sponge trade, is still a man about town; what he doesn't know about the game of poker—"bluff," in Maida Vale—makes no matter. Then Albert Bendon, the owner of Wuffy and other horses, before he went on the Stock Exchange years ago, used to look after the interest of his firm in the big cities with two or three tons of clocks. David Samuel, in the watch trade, has retired now and lives in Paris—he was one of the best little friends possible to meet. Nat Bernstein, a mantle maker, smoked the best of cigars and was a most amusing companion and good chap. It was extraordinary, the rounds of the different provincial hotels, and we knew exactly on arrival whether there was a "game" on. Be it to the credit of all I met that there was never a suggestion of neglecting a single chance in the way of business. Whatever the temptations to "join in," all which could be done was finished first. I was punished once for "sitting down" too soon—there was one letter left unwritten until the next day. I came into the room about five minutes too early. "Shall I deal you in?" asked the man with the cards. "Go ahead," and I had not sat down when I picked up my cards—a king full—three kings and two aces—and was as judicious as I could be not to scare others away. One player bought three and we were soon up to the limit, ten pounds—we started with one two four to play, doubling up to a ten-pound limit. He had four queens. I was never in a hurry again.

AFTER THE "GAME"

There used to be some merry meetings in Dublin and Glasgow, and the game lasted far into the night, but an hour's sleep and—the music could be faced. It was a darned nuisance to have an early appointment, however; but somehow there could be a smug smile and an affectation of virtue.

CHAPTER XXI

LUCKY RACING DAYS

A Little Haul at Leopardstown—Similar Incidents in Paris—Dull Provincial Towns—Café Life wanted—The Selling-off at Brighton—Clearing a Stock—Some of the Buyers

IN Dublin once I had a very small bank-roll on the Friday night, but won a fiver at the game. On Saturday there was Leopardstown and out of six races I backed three winners. The Monday following was when they laid big odds on Bellevin and I backed Waterhen for the Leopardstown Grand Prize: she won at a fine price. There was a horse named Shot who had run second to Waterhen on the Saturday, and I got a hundred to eight and the same odds in running. I know I backed five out of six of the winners: it was all ready. I had money in every pocket, and when getting back to my hotel in Dublin locked the door of my room and took out the contents: it was a real parcel and the most fascinating experience. I cleared up over two hundred and thirty pounds, which is money at any time, but at the particular moment I felt I had notes to burn. That evening there was all the glory of the capitalist and a lucky gambler to back up the bluffs, and I won all there was in the room, and there was a good fat amount on the cuff; but really the game cost me a lot of money: I was too inquisitive or something.

A similar incident to that at Leopardstown, where there was something to count on coming home, was in Paris about fifteen years ago. I was living there at

GIVING WINNERS IN PARIS

the time, and went to Longchamp with an American. He had been introduced to me by a very great friend, and was spending a few days in Paris. I asked him to luncheon at Armenonville, after which I had my work to attend to. He was very anxious to have a little speculation on the events of the day at the races. I had certain clear ideas about the day's card, which included a handicap for which there was likely to be about twenty runners. He asked me if I would put some money on for him, but I had a lot of things to attend to that day, besides which I made it almost a principle that I would not undertake commissions for anyone. There was a lot of talk in Paris about "gentlemen taking other gentlemen racing," and it was better, therefore, to steer clear of innuendoes. During luncheon I told my ideas of the races, including the big handicap, and at the end he said: "What's good enough for you is good enough for me." He had been on a French racecourse in previous years and only wanted to be reminded of the numerals to assist him in asking for tickets at the *guichets*.

"How much are you going to have on?" he said.

"Oh, I am a poor man: I shall only have three hundred francs altogether—fifty francs on each race," I said. I was not surprised when he suggested that he would have nine times the amount. So it was agreed that my bets should go on with his. He was to put five hundred on each—four hundred and fifty francs for himself and fifty francs for me. I showed him the ropes before the racing started, and helped him to take the tickets for the first event, and then left him giving him my bit for investment.

In the first race ours was second, but he was not

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daunted. The second race came home at about three to one. Still I did not see him. In the third race we had another winner, and to the best of my recollection at seven to two. The fourth we drew a blank. There was a big field, I noticed, for the fifth, and fortunately, or unfortunately I ran across him before he had put the money on. I said: "There is going to be a big field, and I think we had better divide our money—half to win and half for a place."

"We have won up to now," he emphasised, "so suppose I put on five hundred francs each way and you have fifty each way." In that absurd spirit of caution which so frequently mars a good day I said I would only have forty each way, and then I left him to do the business. Our horse won at thirty-two to one. I found my American friend before the last race and he was radiant. "Why don't you put the whole lot on?" asked he. "Because I haven't the pluck." There was a large attendance that day and a few hundred francs more or less did not much interfere with the long prices. I had a great idea that a horse of M. Maurice Ephrussi's called Magistral, a heavily built dark chestnut, would win the last race, and had let myself go and put a hundred francs on. Purkiss, who used to ride in England and died some time back, rode this Magistral, who was a clever winner at about seven to one. I met the American just outside the buffet and we had a small bottle; he wanted to make it a big one—that's how he felt. It was agreed that I should go back to his sitting-room at the hotel and write my article on the day's racing—of this later—and then we were to spend the rest of the evening together.

"Now I tell you what, boy," he said. "I won't touch my pockets until you have done the work. I'll

COUNTING IT OUT

get my *cocher* to take the article down to the office for you." As I was in a pretty good mood for work, I did a column and a bit in quicker time than usual. I had noticed that he had been patting his coat and vest several times.

"How much did you win?" he asked. I soon figured it out, and it came to about one hundred and forty louis—that is, about two thousand eight hundred francs, including the two hundred francs I had given him. It was useful, I can tell you, that thirty-two-to-one chance with the seven-to-one win to finish up with. He had not moved up to then, but taking out a note-case said: "Give me two hundred francs," and he took out three mille notes (one thousand francs each). I took them from him.

"Now let us see what you have won," I said; and then he began to disgorge. From his coat inside pockets, from his trouser pockets outside, and inside his waistcoat came out packets and twisted lumps of paper—fifty-franc, one-hundred-franc, and one-thousand-franc notes. He threw them on the table bit by bit, and asked me to smooth them out and count them. What an exhilarating job it was. I couldn't help being slightly envious at first that I had not let myself go; but it was very simple: I couldn't afford it; in fact, I hadn't the money to do it with. He would have enjoyed the day even if he hadn't backed a winner, but it is human to love winning. When I arrived at about twenty thousand francs there were still many crumpled-up balls of notes remaining. I went on—thirty thousand, thirty-one thousand, thirty-three thousand, and so on up to forty thousand. He had picked up the nice little parcel of over forty thousand francs, or well over sixteen hundred pounds. The rascal had put on a great deal more on several events

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than we had agreed on, and had one thousand francs each way on the last winner, Magistral ; but he had not had more than five hundred each way on the thirty-two-to-one chance. It was his one and only visit to a French race-course that year.

During those mercantile tours little parties would be arranged for on the train nearly every Friday, and a week-end has frequently been spoilt by a rough time during the few hours. Card-playing was an almost necessary diversion, as there are evenings in some places which would become otherwise almost unbearable. Nowadays, of course, what with picture palaces and variety shows everywhere, there is more to do, but how is it that provincial towns are so unutterably dull in the evening to a visitor? Café life for all classes would make our country so much more tolerable, with cards and dominoes played everywhere. Quite recently I saw two Frenchmen playing cards very quietly, annoying nobody, in a corner of the Savoy smoking-room. I watched for the moment they should be stopped. It came; but how barbarous the restrictions of the law can be!

Frequently during the last seventeen or eighteen years I have looked into Drew's shop in Piccadilly Circus, or Finnigan's, and seen the development of designs which were originally mine. The Germans have monopolised a certain class of trade ; they have copied and improved in their own inimitable way. There was always a chance for the Vienna manufacturers; but they are not sufficiently enterprising, and either pay more wages or want bigger profits than the Offenbach people. I went to Vienna once or twice a year and bought a quantity of things, but although we sold them they were fire dear. Still, they are fine artists in the work. There is a great deal of comfort

CLEARING A STOCK

in the racing there, and the trotting meetings are a simple delight. I have never minded railway travelling, and these long journeys, although nothing to distances covered in Australia, were never boring. I had a first-class season ticket from London to Scotland for a long time, and would run up and down the line, picking up business, besides being able to get back to town so easily.

I had a curious experience once at Brighton. We had made a bad debt and had an assignment of the stock and had determined to make the best of it, clearing out the stuff and disposing of the lease in King's Road. I arrived unexpectedly and found the chap in charge reading his Bible when he ought to have been cleaning up the goods. Having taken a look round I went to a big man in the town and tried to sell him the whole caboose as it stood, but everything spelt delay. That same afternoon there was a big announcement put on the windows that everything was to be sacrificed regardless of cost, and I meant it. We took a tenner the first day and then began the crowd. Day after day they poured in, and had everything in a few days. I would put a price on anything. Racing men came in and would buy silver-framed cigar-cases, letter-wallets with gold mounts, and other nice things. The customers included bookmakers, lumberers and whisperers, professional backers and what not. "Let me have that lot for a tenner," said one man, "and you shall have a five-to-one winner to-day." Both came off. One gaunt middle-aged girl bought military brushes for skin brushes; they were hanging about and had to go! I remember that Courtice Pounds came in and bought a lot of things; we made each other's acquaintance over that. What a fine artist!

About the Brighton show. The lease was sold too,

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and the whole result was far greater than anticipated. I have known Brighton under every circumstance—racing, residentially, week-ending, gin-crawling, adventurously, commercially, journalistically, passionately. There is no place quite like it.

CHAPTER XXII

HOTEL INCIDENTS

Richard Fry's Methods—Forced to win over La Fleche—A Champion Feeder—One Thousand Pounds or a Commercial Failure—I retire from Leather—Teas and Boarding-house—My Paper, the *Queue*

DURING all these days of business there was always a close touch with racing, and the hand was kept in by writing articles and some short stories, besides which there were occasional turf letters abroad. These used to be done quite comfortably in slack moments. The late Harry Heard, at the old Neptune in Liverpool, was a good fellow, and at race times, then as now, there was a good muster. The late R. H. Fry made the Neptune his headquarters when in the city, where he had once kept a shop. Many were the visits paid to Fry in the evening when an owner wanted to get advantageous terms about a horse. When Ringmaster ran for the Liverpool Summer Cup, won by Veracity, Val Crasweller, J. E. Savile and I walked down there. I waited while they interviewed Fry and backed Ringmaster to win five thousand pounds. Fry was to have the market to himself. The price was not to be less than a hundred to seven nor longer than twenty to one. It saved a lot of trouble and Fry was a most fair-dealing man and did many commissions that way.

At the George Hotel in Edinburgh, where I stayed, the late Sam Hall of Birmingham, brother of A. B. Hall, who owned the business of H. Greaves at the

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corner of New Street and Corporation Street, came in one evening with three others. He left me to entertain them. "Jolly" Ross was one, a good chap, a restaurateur and caterer, and brother of Mackenzie Ross. Johnny Scales, a man well known about Edinburgh, was another, and Harry Wright, the book-maker. We had some wine and Wright could sing out nothing but: "I want to lay six fifties La Fleche." She was favourite for the Cambridgeshire. Jolly Ross was talking about all sorts of things with his hoarse voice, and I was wanting to hear how many tons of pork pies, etc., he sold one day at the Manchester Exhibition, where he had the refreshments. Conversation was difficult, however, with Wright droning out what he wanted to lay against La Fleche. It got on my nerves, so I snapped him up, "I'll take it," and he shut up. She had eight ten and I fancied her, but in the morning I thought I had been too hasty. Nevertheless, the investment was added to. On the day of the race I wired somewhere to back Pensioner, as I thought, to win; and a score on La Fleche for a place, but made a mistake in the code and La Fleche was written to win and Pensioner, who was second, for a shop. Luck runs in streaks. I didn't miss it.

There was always very good food at the George, and so there was at Mrs Cuthbert's in Glasgow. An enormous amount of business was done there and Mrs Cuthbert is known to all who visit Glasgow on business. Her strong personality attracted a number of people to the house. A keen business woman, her hospitality could be lavish when she was entertaining, and she played cards better than any woman I ever saw, and would win or lose in the most sporting way. Glasgow was the finest place I went to for my business. It

LUXURIES FOR A CLIENT

had to be something, for they do everything there to restrict pleasure. But there were generally some good chaps at the Royal, of course mixed with impossible persons—pompous, shoppy and vulgar and, what is much worse, uninteresting and dull.

I remember in a certain place, it doesn't matter where, one man I used to do a lot of business with was with me nearly every day. I remember he once lent me fifty pounds, which should have removed any idea that he was eccentric—he had it back four days after. He was fond of his stomach and *could* eat. One day I heard he and his family were travelling to the seaside, so I bought him an enormous pineapple, thinking it would be nice for his children. On the Monday I asked him how the children enjoyed it. "I didna give them any of it; I dinna believe in putting rich food in their stomachs." I suppose he scoffed the lot!

There was another man from the far north who used to make the journey to Glasgow to do his business with me. I had to go through it each time: read a tract and listen to an exhortation on temperance and being unsaved. One night I had to begin with him at midnight and finish the business at two A.M. and then did in a packet at poker. Foolish! I didn't mind the talk, but he used to "nurse the hand" when giving a greeting. Ugh!

In Manchester Charlie Payne, known to everyone, was very kind on many occasions. I remember that it was considered at a board meeting that one thousand pounds in cash would be useful to the firm if it could be realised on a lot of already manufactured stock. Everything possible was packed in cases and off I went to Birmingham and did a deal with A. B. Hall to the tune of five hundred pounds. The stuff was

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delivered and I was waiting for the cheque—the kernel of the whole matter. To my amazement I heard Hall, who has retired and goes racing now as a pastime, had gone to London! Looking at my watch I saw the train went in six minutes! I was just in time and he wrote me out the cheque at the bookstall, but the suspense whether I should “touch” that day was agony. With the remaining cases I pushed on to Manchester. The next morning another hundred pounds was collected from a man for something I knew he could do with, and I managed to get Charlie Payne round in the afternoon with two of his men. Payne began putting down one or two things with a sort of air like the Laird in *Trilby*, “Je prong,” but got tired at the slow progress, and lighting a fresh cigar and taking off his coat said: “What’ll you take for the whole lot, the roomful?” I made a hasty calculation and mentioned a figure. We haggled for a minute and then he pulled out a blank cheque, signed it; got some men up; sent for a couple of drays and absolutely cleared the show. He had a rare bargain, but deserved it; he always had the courage of his opinions. He introduced me to a nice little club, the Bohemian, which, if I remember rightly, afterwards became the Garrick. That is where I first met Tommy Edge; he was attacking all those Land’s End to John o’ Groats records at the time. He went racing, of course. Now he is the owner of newspapers and a big string of race-horses. A merry soul Tommy Edge, a good fellow, a rare judge of a handicap and will always listen to others: never posing as a know-all.

Business matters went on until through various causes I got tired of leather and embarked in one or two little schemes on my own, which brought in a bit.

THE BROKERS IN

One in particular was the establishing of depots which should send luncheons and teas out to offices. It took on, but I sold out. I was dining with the late Claud Nugent one night at his boarding house near Baker Street. It seemed comfortable, so I went to live there for a bit. The people who owned it wanted to leave, so one morning at breakfast, acting on an impulse, I offered to take it over at a tenner a week. It was accepted and I found myself adding to responsibilities by running a private hotel. My family, who lived in the country, thought I was mad. There was a lot spent on the place by me, but having installed a manageress I had to get "out" to do something else. I started a theatrical paper, the *Queue*, which ran for a while, but I lost on that what I was gaining on the roundabouts of the hotel. The rent got behind and I handed the show back after having the brokers in on Christmas Eve: but I paid every bob—about three hundred and seventy pounds. It was a pity to give it up in one way, as there was a good connection, but a place like that wants as much looking after as any other business. Claud Nugent lived there all the time, and we used to turn out some songs, my verses welded to his music. He was a very amusing chap, and loved his surroundings as there were always people to talk to and plenty of bottles in the house. He played the piano, improvised, and was very apt at impromptu verse. When I first knew him he was secretary of the Lyric Club, and was in his element then. At one time he and Eustace ("Scrobbie") Ponsonby were inseparable; they would sing duets and write them together. By the way, I suppose the majority know how "Scrobbie" came by his name: it was through slipping into a very wet ditch at Eton, and *Scrobba*—a ditch, in Latin—stuck to him ever

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after. Major Nugent, of the Irish Guards, was the elder brother of Claud, and a very clever amateur and writer of playlets. One thing he wrote on the theme of Mr Bumble should have found a place anywhere where a tiny operetta is acceptable.

CHAPTER XXIII

ON THE NEW YORK HERALD

No Fixed Salary—Called to Beaulieu—Racing Correspondent—First Interview with James Gordon Bennett—The Why of my *Nom de Plume*—The Commodore's Tireless Energy—Genius of Control—Editors in Charge—Keeness for Polo

TAKING a trip to Paris soon after this, I stayed on and wrote to Mr James Gordon Bennett to see if he could find room for me to write the racing article on the *New York Herald*. I had kept in touch with French racing form and knew a good many of the crowd on the turf there. A week or so afterwards I received a letter to go and see the editor in charge. He told me that I could go ahead and begin at Maisons Laffitte the next day. Nothing was said about salary, and I was told to pay the twenty francs a day admission pending the fixing up of everything. As luck would have it, there was a certain amount of brightness about the early articles, but day followed day without me hearing anything with regard to remuneration. Wilton, the editor, then told me not to worry. In about a week, at the office one night, he asked me what I had been making: he had received a wire from "The Commodore," as Mr Bennett is called. I told him, and the day after received instructions to go down to Beaulieu. The ticket and sleeper were waiting for me, and my rooms engaged at Beaulieu. A bath, a change, and a good *déjeuner*, and I drove along the lovely road up to the Villa Namouna, a beautiful house surrounded by trees. My feelings were mixed as I walked up the

drive. James Gordon Bennett was a man I had looked forward for many years to meeting. He had been such an interesting personality to those in any way connected with journalism. I had been given one word of advice: that he was nearly sure to ask me before the end of the interview whether I wanted any money, and that it would be wise in any circumstances to say "No," that there was no necessity for it. I was shown into a library and presently in came a tall figure with a grey moustache and inscrutable face with eyes it was next to impossible to penetrate. He looked at me and I looked at him—noticing he wore his good clothes well. Then he spoke. He was interested in the sport in the *Herald*; he had read mine he told me. Then followed a discussion about terms. I was to receive a fixed salary for the racing article and paid for space on other work which was to be put in my way. Then came the question of a *nom de plume*. He asked me if I had any ideas, and I gave them, but somehow I felt it would be one of his selection. Eventually he said: "Lord Roberts is in the public eye just at present more than anyone else, what do you think of 'Bobs'?" It seemed admirable, and I told him so, and so it was settled. He added that I could take a day or so and go to Monte Carlo. Inevitably came the question which I had been told would be put: "Do you want any money?" he asked, taking a big roll of notes out of his pocket. "No, thanks, Mr Bennett; it is very kind of you, all the same." One or two generalities and I could see the twenty minutes we had talked was long enough; so, trying to catch a glimpse which should tell me more of the inner mind of the magnate than others knew, I thanked him and walked out with a permanent job. I was impressed, too, with the man: it is inevitable to be so. At that

AT TROUVILLE

villa at Beaulieu he controls the mighty *New York Herald* and its Paris edition, also the *Evening Telegram* in New York. He can be a tireless worker and his bill for telegrams and cables of instruction must be enormous. His genius is undeniable and his power of initiating new features is instinctive, but in the harbour of Villefranche was the *Namouna*, on which he could go and have a short cruise or an ocean voyage. Building was his new yacht, the *Lysistrata*, a palace, with between seventy and eighty hands on board. Christiansen, a Dane, who retired about 1904, was his trusted right hand in business matters—private and in connection with the paper. He had started life with employment on the yacht and worked his way up. I found him a delightful man, as was Mitchell, who held a position which might be called news or day editor.

After that interview with Mr Bennett at Beaulieu I spoke to him on only two other occasions. After the first summer racing season was nearly over he sent for me, asking me what I proposed to do, and then told me I could go to Trouville. The interview was interesting, as I saw him in his flat in the Avenue des Champs Elysées. The Trouville-Deauville season was just opening, and he gave me various pointers about the society news I had to get there, and a letter of introduction to the late Mr Henry Ridgway, who was one of the best known of the American colony in Paris. He was a member of the Jockey Club, a steward of the Deauville Meeting and Master of the Hounds at Pau. Mr Bennett on that summer morning when he was giving me my final instructions told me with emphasis several quite good stories which were really parables designed to impress how intelligence could bear on obtaining intelligence, at the same time endeavouring to wear an invisible cloak so far as the *Herald* was

concerned. The other time I spoke to him was in the editorial office in the Rue de Louvre one night. He would suddenly march in quite unexpectedly, but his visits were infrequent. I could never appreciate the advantage of being "Editor in Charge." There were several during my time. They would most frequently be promoted from the staff and then put back to sub-editing, the increased pay when in charge was a hundred and twenty-five francs, or a fiver a week. When Mr Bennett was at Beaulieu, or elsewhere, on his yacht it was easy, but when in Paris, Snyder, who now I believe edits the *New York Tribune*, and who came over from managing the London office to take charge of the paper in Paris, had to see the paper to bed at about a quarter to five and be at "The Commodore's" flat to have an inquest on the paper at seven-thirty A.M. Of course sometimes it would be possible to leave earlier and snatch a few hours' sleep, but it always struck me as a pretty rough journey, especially as an editor in charge would have to get a move on him in the early afternoon. Naturally there were some evenings when there was less to do, and the editor could get away a little earlier.

In the course of my long walks in the Bois, sometimes on the way to or returning from the racecourse or the polo ground, I would see and pass Mr Bennett sitting alone in some shady spot. I had been told that it was not etiquette to stop and converse with him, which seemed rather absurd and snobbish—but did *he* ever say so? I doubt it; but it may be every man in certain moments likes to be alone with his own thoughts. He has disliked England for many years, although at one time he was partial to this country and spent a considerable time here. A complex nature: it is the privilege of multi-millionaires.



RICHARD FIGES—AT THE POST WITH THE FLAG



ODD STUNTS ON THE *HERALD*

During the time on the *Herald* in Paris, besides writing the racing article I did the polo column and many stories on the odd features of Paris, including Sunday stories about the bird market, the dog market, Government tobacco factories and dives into inner Paris, and went on all sorts of stunts in the dull days of winter, during the racing suspension from December to February. At Bagatelle, the polo ground, they were very nice to me, giving me honorary membership which carried the right of taking guests. The French players were very keen, Baron Edouard de Rothschild in particular. He had many real good ponies and rode well. M. Raoul Duval was the best player of all of the born Frenchmen. Many visiting teams came over and those residents in Paris, the Escandons, including the Marquis de Villavieja, had a lot of good mounts, including Mexican ponies, which were readily trained. Taylor had charge of them. I daresay all polo players know him; he has a son a jockey, who has been riding quite successfully in Belgium. Mr Bennett did a great deal, in the way of financial support, to the polo ground in Paris.

CHAPTER XXIV

FRENCH RACING DIVISION

“ Bobs’ ” Articles—*Herald’s* Attractiveness—Richard Figes the Starter—His Love of “ Spoof ”—“ JOHNNY ”—Sir George Chetwynd

MEN of all sorts and conditions were met with during my time in France. Leading French owners were always willing to talk and give information—especially to the *Herald*. There was a certain vogue for my racing articles and I managed to ring the changes from day to day—not giving a bald *compte rendu* of what had transpired, but getting in a little bright feature, and of course stuffed the column full of names; that was one of the features of the paper which pretty soon I began to see the value of. There are tens of thousands of people on the Continent who have nothing to do except enjoy themselves. They become accustomed to go about from one place to another, making crowds of acquaintances and a few friends. They read with wonderful interest who is here and there, and what is going on too. The *Herald* is really then a newspaper and an authoritative society paper.

Richard Figes was the starter at the majority of the meetings, and having known him in former years in England he helped me to become familiar with who was who. He dispensed hospitality in his flat in the Avenue de la Grande Armée, and I ate my first Christmas dinner in France at his place. He was very fond of the best, which made his table all the more attractive. His wife was an excellent soul; she died a few years after Figes came back to this country:



“JOHNNY”
The Diplomatist of the “Chatham”



FIGES'S SPOOF

they settled down at Southampton. He had the confidence of the stewards of various meetings over in France for many years. He had his peculiarities, and above all hated criticism; although I had been such an old friend he cut me dead one day because I happened to say that there had been a stragglng start, or words to that effect. However, the grievance I am sure was not a real one. Dick Figes came from Salisbury, where his father kept an hotel. He knew everyone in the racing world when he was quite young, and was assistant to that great starter, Tom MacGeorge, from whom he learnt the art of flag starting. The business was no sinecure in France, I can tell you, for a Parisian racing crowd can be very ugly when the horses do not get away as they wish them. Cries of "Voleur!" are common, also whistling, which denotes hissing, and I have seen glass bottles thrown. Then, of course, there have been real riots.

Figes would get some convivial souls together on occasions at his flat. He was fond of practical jokes, and once he met a friend of his in the hall, saying he was just going to dress for dinner, as Lord and Lady So-and-so were coming. The poor chap who had been invited to dinner rushed off and donned his best "soup and fish," returning turned out most immaculately—a blazing diamond stud—only to find Figes and I playing billiards in our shirt sleeves and no lord knows who! The good old Wiltshire custom of putting half a tumblerful of whisky with less of soda came off too now and then, but I knew the "moonraker" county habit, so much in vogue in farmhouses in the bacon country.

Of course, the Chatham Hotel in the Rue Daunou has been a club to me for more years than I care to remember. That wonderful little man, "Johnny"

FRENCH RACING DIVISION

—whose real name is Mitta, his surname—wields wonderful sway at that place in the bar. It has been, and always will be, I suppose, the great racing rendezvous. “Johnny” can be genial, severe, communicative or secretive. He has always been an intelligence department as to where everybody we knew was and must have listened most carefully to all which was told him. Owners, trainers, jockeys, bookmakers, backers and others well known on and off the racecourse were met there. It was therefore no trouble after a while to find out bits of information which were necessary for the paper. On certain days when there was a disinclination to go racing, and it was unimportant, there could generally be an interview with a well-known man on some important topic. Sir George Chetwynd was very kind to me in this respect, and would give me a column full of interest on occasions. Sir George’s memory extends further back than my own, and his stories and opinions were so absorbing and sound. What a pity it is that he hasn’t a big stable of horses to-day! When in Paris he would not go racing regularly, but usually on Sunday he would be at either Auteuil or Longchamp. It shows how a man once so tremendously keen can break away from it.

Lord Alfred Douglas had a small string of horses at Chantilly and one of his, a horse named Hardi, once did me no end of a turn at Maison Laffitte. Running unbacked by his owner, he started at fifty-seven to one to win and twelve to one for a place and your Uncle Dudley won a much-needed little stock of notes. I had all sorts of impending obligations, including a family practically in pawn at Dieppe, advance rent of a furnished flat I had taken, and heaps of odd things to pay for and things to buy.



"BILL" SWEEPER
One of the best known trainers in France

CHAPTER XXV

THE FRENCH "NEWMARKET"

One and Only Sweeper—Charlie "Cards"—Incidents of the Commune—The Late Alf Suffolk—Danny Maher's First Appearance on a French Racecourse—American Riders—Late Tom Lane before a Big Race—William Pratt and George Stern

THERE were some good times at Chantilly with capital hospitality from trainers and others. "Bill" Sweeper, who then trained for Prince Murat, is known both in France and England. He was always a good friend to me, putting me wise about all sorts of odd things which made life more welcome and my work easier. I am glad that the cordial friendship has been continued to this day. George Milton, who trained then for M. Marghilowan, was a most hospitable man. He combined veterinary surgery with training, and won many races. Milton could be more emphatic about the chance of a horse of his than many others. "Bob" Ruddock—well, everyone knows him. He is the most English of the English, yet has become quite a Frenchman in his command of argot and flow of oratory when he is excited, especially at pigeon-shooting. I am picking out those men who were among the best known in my days there.

Lord Alfred Douglas—in a spirit of quixotism—wanted to give a has-been of a jockey a chance—and a mount. "Why do you want to throw the chance of winning away, my lord?" asked Sweeper. "I saw your man this morning."

"How did he look?" asked the owner.

THE FRENCH "NEWMARKET"

"Wobbling like a rice pudding going to the bakehouse on a cold frosty morning."

A relative of Sweeper went out to East Africa and stayed with his brother-in-law at an up-country inn. The morning after he arrived his host said: "When you've had a good breakfast, old man, we'll go out and try and find a lion!" "I ain't lost no lion," replied Sweeper's relative. This has been told, but it originated with Sweeper.

I suppose everyone knows Charlie "Cards"—Hudson his real name is. A wonderful character who has known Paris since the time you who are old enough to be grandfathers can remember. Everything which has transpired on the French turf during the last—well, ask Charlie "how long?"—is imprinted on his memory. His story of the Commune period—nearly forty-five years ago—is enormous. He was employed in a printing place and the Communards coralled him in the office and sent him out for some bottles of wine. Charlie didn't want the money, but, once outside the front door, never intended to come back with the wine—or near those lawless bullies, so simply he did a guy. He had more worry over the risk of that day than he ever had over backing a loser. All the men who have come and gone during nearly two generations Hudson has known: this part of it he ought to be telling, not I. His earnest manner and underlying common-sense have attracted many to him. Those days in 1899, 1900 and 1901 can never be forgotten.

Alf Suffolk—now dead—can be recalled. Poor chap! he was of a weak physique, yet could be the most aggressive and pugnacious of the racing crowd, especially when he had a kink about or a grudge against anybody. He at first took a most violent dislike to me—which in itself was rather extraordinary,

A REPUDIATING OWNER

as I have always been rather an ingratiating sort of person. I have always had the idea that I would either cut myself out or the other fellow could, if we did not hit it. Suffolk tried to fall foul of me on various occasions, but one evening after I had known him about three months he told me that he had been quite mistaken, and asked me whether I could accept him as a friend. Suffolk used to do commissions for certain well-known owners—that was when the book-makers were allowed and betted on the rails of the weighing enclosure. When they were suppressed, and betting declared illegal, his “graft”—English sense—was finished, and he made up his mind to retire to England; he eventually settled at Leicester. Would you believe it? One owner gave him the cold and glassy when he tried to collect the existing balance. Suffolk went to his house and mentioned the difference and this French titled person raised his riding whip to him when he began to assert that he had done a certain commission which up to that time had remained unsettled. We all know that Suffolk was a fighting sort of man, but in this case he was simply asking for what was *his*. The idea of a man repudiating when betting became illegal for what he would be drawn over is certainly a bit thick. Suffolk did some pretty big commissions for good men and was right in it up to the time they stopped it all.

I was at Longchamp one Saturday in 1901 when Danny Maher came over to ride: it was his first experience on a French racecourse, and he took three events that afternoon. MacIntyre, Rigby, Patsy Freeman, MacDermott, Cass Sloan and MacJoynt were all arrivals about that period. The coloured jockey Simms, too, had a season or more there, but returned to America. MacJoynt has been specially engaged

THE FRENCH "NEWMARKET"

by Mr W. K. Vanderbilt. "Mac" was a real good jockey, but never somehow assimilated Paris. He could never get into his stride and "distractions"—because he was never real happy there—impaired his constitution and, poor chap, he has told me many times that he used to be distracted with headaches. He has passed away from training stables, racecourse and colours. Archie MacIntyre got a good start and one day at Maison Laffitte at the outset of his career managed to get four winning mounts. I tried to help them all along, the *Herald* being an American paper.

The veteran rider among the Anglo-French jockeys was T. Lane, who lived at Chantilly: he had a wonderful record, including three successes in the Grand Prix. On the day of a big race he would walk round the outskirts of the paddock, keeping aloof from everyone. Sweeper first pointed this out to me on a Grand Prix day. "See old Tommy over there?" he whispered. "Go over and speak to him. I wouldn't myself, but it'll take him out of himself. Now go on." Whether Sweeper was testing my courage or really wanted me to give a little cheer to Lane, I don't know, but the great jockey, who was a man bordering on middle age, gave a start when I touched his arm and said: "Talk to me about England," as if to say, "for God's sake don't discuss racing." I soon had him laughing, and much interested about many things—not a suggestion of horses in the long chat. Sweeper said afterwards: "You'll see that he will be at his best to-day," and he was. The two I have just mentioned were fast friends. When Lane died it was emptiness all round to poor old Madge and the other senior jockeys; they were a crew minus a skipper.

Willie Pratt, now a successful trainer, was riding in great form fourteen or fifteen years ago. It was a

GEORGE STERN'S FINISHES

grand finish he rode on Cheri in the Grand Prix of 1901, and he showed splendid judgment on the beautiful Semendria in the Grand Prix of 1900. In the saddle he reminded me very much of his illustrious relative, Fred Archer, especially in the power and methods of finishing. I have known nearly all the Pratts: Fred at Wantage, Frank, Ormonde and Arthur. Their father is a good sportsman and a most understandable man: he has, or had, a business at Cheltenham.

George Stern was making his name while I was on the *Herald*. There was nothing to stop his career as, fortunately for him, he was exempt from military service although born in France. He was riding winner after winner. Some of his finishes got him on the carpet now and then—in his earlier days. But nothing was wilful. He used to get right down over the horse's neck and ride for dear life. He forgot everything except a straight course, but this led to a tangle now and then. He has the distinction of being the richest jockey alive, his investments having taken a wide range. What a record, too, in the saddle, season after season!

CHAPTER XXVI

PARISIAN GAMBLING CLUBS

Attraction of the Capucines—John W. Gates' Open Banks—Jenks' Whims—A Prussian Gourmet—Raising the Wind on Sunday

I WAS a member of nearly all the *tripots* (gambling houses), including the Cercle des Capucines and the Cercle de l'Escrime. Really, to a man who is only a mild gambler, they were all great value; in fact, they dispensed hospitality. There was no distinction made in the politeness shown towards the big man and the lesser punter. I wonder where in the world a dinner such as served at the Capucines could be found for four francs—every variety of *plats* with a large bottle of good Bordeaux or fine Burgundy, and more if that were not enough. Then there were excellent club rooms right apart from the *salle de jeu*. In my time at the Capucines the biggest gambler I saw was the late John W. Gates, the American millionaire, who was associated with Drake in Royal Flush, the winner of the Stewards' Cup in 1900. Incidentally, that was one of the best-arranged *coups* there had been for many years, on account of the money averaging so well. Royal Flush started at eleven and two and Gates and Drake won one hundred thousand pounds.

John W. Gates would come into the Capucines in the evening and the fact was immediately telephoned all round the city, and punters would roll up by the dozen. Gates gave an open bank—that is, there was no fixed sum in the bank, and any stake was "on." A most courageous personality. At intervals he would

BIG BANKERS

get sick of play, but after a walk round the club, one or two drinks, and perhaps five minutes' listening to the theatraphone, he would return and throw down a hundred or a hundred and fifty thousand francs and let them have a go at it again. As a rule he was accompanied by two or three friends, who would for the chief part look on; they may have been in with him in certain proportions.

At the Cercle de l'Escrime, where M. Bloch of Dieppe fame was the responsible head, Jenks was the great holder of the banks. Mr Jenks is well known to everyone as the proprietor of many London properties, including the now demolished Long's Hotel. Mr Jenks had, and may have still, curious views concerning the run of his banks. It was not capriciousness, but simply fancy, which would make him throw in the cards, after the second *coup*, on occasions, although he may have paid an expensive fee to the *cagnotte*. Of course a gambler like this would have special sums charged him by the house, but still, it took a lot of courage to make a *salade* of the cards because he didn't like the look of the "run." He wouldn't get up disgusted; in fact, never show in his face what he was feeling, but simply pause for a moment and then with a turn of his hand indicate that he wasn't going on.

The real history of many men in those clubs was a mystery. It was at one of them that the syndicate was formed to enable a certain member of the French nobility to visit New York in style and marry a very wealthy American woman. The marriage didn't turn out well. The head of the family was an inveterate punter when he had any money, and the problem was, how was it apparently inexhaustible? There was not a daily supply, but he would come in nearly every day to one club or the other. Then there was the late

PARISIAN GAMBLING CLUB

Baron Seidlitz, a man who was known to London but particularly well acquainted with Paris and Parisians. Seidlitz was an artist in gastronomy. He acquired his first knowledge in Germany, for his father was a leading Minister of State in Prussia. The son—the one I knew—had to be most careful of his diet through intestinal troubles, but would nevertheless take the most serious pains over every part of dinners at the Capucines. He would remark on every *plat*, and where he had tasted the best food in the world. It is flattering to English private house life that he considered that the finest dishes were produced in British kitchens; he was particularly eloquent about our turbot, saddles of mutton and vegetables. “The only country in the world where the best part of the turbot is left for the table,” he would exclaim, as if considering higher art. He would talk all through dinner of his wish to make me a special sauce with the cold boar’s head when it arrived, and would mix a kind of Cumberland sauce which beat everything ever tasted. The *hure de sanglier* would be brought in two thick slices, and the Baron would work without ceasing, blending in the red-currant jelly with the Worcester Sauce, vinegar and mustard until he had it perfect: every film of jelly properly dissolved. Then he would give a final whisk, and over the two luscious slices would go the appealing syrup. He would then watch my face to see the result. I must be a bit of an actor, for I would regulate my appreciation and put the due expression into the trial—each time—of that great achievement of his. There was the gourmet’s look of anticipation, followed by the raising of the first bit on the fork, then the smile of recognition of the taste, and the wind up of putting my hand across the table to shake his; the extension of a rare compliment. He would be

A SUNDAY "HOCK"

delighted, and enjoy every bit himself. He would eat a lot too, but when we were together and drifted through a long evening into the early morning at all-night cafés he would not or could not take anything but hot milk.

He knew more about Paris than many born and bred men in the city, and how to manage things. I can recall that one Sunday—it was a big race day—an American I knew came to me saying: "Look here, old man, I was up late last night playing a game, and lost all my ready money. I *must* go to the race-track to-day, and I haven't ten dollars. Say, I have these two rings, mine and one of Madame's; they're worth two thousand dollars. Can you get me five thousand francs anywhere?" Now I ask you: Sunday and after twelve o'clock! There was no chance with the *mont de piété*, there was no earthly at that hour at the clubs, besides which, it is an odd sort of jaunt to hawk a couple of "fawnees" round to raise the wind on. I was at my wit's end. It would have been easy to say: "I don't know anyone," but the owner of the rings was so crazy on going racing. I suggested his hotel manager, but he explained that he had borrowed the previous evening to play cards with.

Suddenly I thought of Seidlitz, and we drove round to his place. It was an off chance, but he was a man of such illimitable resource. I told him in a few words the American had told me to ask him to *déjeuner*. That did it. The Prussian thought for a moment: then I put in as a make-weight the luncheon at Larue's, and *he* could order it. "I'll manage it," he said. "We'll drive to Larue's: we'll order the *déjeuner*. Your friend will lend me his carriage and I'll be back in ten minutes." I introduced the two men, and the American was in the seventh heaven. We ordered a

PARISIAN GAMBLING CLUBS

gargantuan repast and Seidlitz disappeared: it was now twelve-thirty. In less than ten minutes he reappeared saying the five thousand francs would be there at one-thirty: it was brought!

Put yourself in that position on a Sunday in a foreign country and you might have a million's worth of "junk" and not be able to raise a penny. What a chancellor for an impecunious principality! Seidlitz took a lot of interest in my work, but always preferred to give his money a chance at baccarat rather than at the races; nevertheless would have a bet if I had an extra strong fancy. He had theories, systems, great schemes—financial and exploring, but hadn't the stomach to see many of them through.

CHAPTER XXVII

CASINO GAMES

Russian Prince of Gamblers—The Rivals at Biarritz—General Berg's Supper—Why he didn't play Baccarat

At the clubs in Trouville and Dieppe there used to be some merry evenings. In the inner club at the former place, the "Union," women are admitted, and several would pull out a big bank-roll and gamble with the best of them. The majority of the principal owners were at the tables, and some of the biggest "banks" were given by them, these, including Baron Edouard de Rothschild, the present head of the Paris house; M. Gaston Dreyfus, who owned Presto, the conqueror of Pretty Polly in the Prix du Conseil Municipal, and others.

At Biarritz General Berg, a Russian, closely allied by marriage with certain high personages, was the chief banker. He would lose or win a fortune without turning a hair. I was at Biarritz once when a big fight was going on between the rival casinos. At the "Municipal," run by "Papa" Bloch of the Dieppe Casino, and the Cercle de l'Escrime in Paris, just mentioned, ladies could go everywhere, but at the rival show at the top of the town women were barred from the *cercle privé*. Nevertheless, they wandered about in the public rooms, playing the ridiculous "ball" game which has succeeded the interesting *petits chevaux*.

Occasionally two or three men, tired for the moment of play, would come out and spend a quarter

CASINO GAMES

of an hour with one or the other. I can tell you the administration of that place spared neither expense nor trouble to keep the dames there. Entertainments used to be organised for them too. General Berg gave a supper one evening at twelve-thirty at which I was one of the few men present—three of the other sex to one of mine. It was at the end of September, but even the flowers on the table cost just on a hundred pounds, which for thirty guests was doing it pretty well; but what did it matter when two-thousand-louis banks, and in some cases unlimited ones, were going all the time. Some of the most celebrated women known to all the casinos of Europe were there, and the jewels were extraordinary. It was when La Belle Otero was at her zenith. I have seen her in shows at various vaudeville theatres with more or less success, but if she could have given on the stage the delightful little songs and dances with which she entertained us that evening she would have been a never-failing attraction everywhere.

The mistake which English people make is to go to Biarritz in what is called the English season—winter. There is no more delightful place from the beginning of September to the middle of October, when the Russians and the Spaniards spend their money so freely. My first and only experience of a bull fight was at Bayonne, near Biarritz. I never wish to see another one. To call it sport is a sickening misnomer, especially when they are trying out some inexperienced wielders of the sword which puts the poor brutes out of existence. Bull fighting came into existence in a country whose history has ever been cruel to brutality, and it is revolting to think that in this era it can still flourish. I mention it to show by comparison how racing should be encouraged. Racing,

PLAYING THE "GAME"

indeed, brings out all the finer qualities of true sportsmanship, and it is a curious study how the same traits can be brought out in men of different nationalities and races.

Just another word about gambling clubs at the various continental resorts. It is astonishing with what discrimination stacks of chips are issued to men on credit. The controllers seem to know exactly who is good for money and who isn't. But my experience is that any man with a reputation need never worry about obtaining a sufficient supply to continue play should he so desire. Of course the amounts will vary. So far as I know there is no organised "intelligence" department, yet few mistakes are made in the accommodation given. Of course the profits are stupendous, so that some latitude can be well afforded. Among the big men very few bad debts are made, for year after year the same round of players go to their old haunts at the various *plages*, or inland watering-places.

Are the games straight? In nineteen cases out of twenty, yes. In the odd instance it can be done so cleverly at times by a banker being put into the chair by the administration, and even then who is able to say exactly how it is done? I knew an elderly Frenchman who had the reputation of being a card-player—that is, he was cleverer than his fellows. I will not emphasise my description of his calling. I happened to see him one day sitting on the terrace of a certain casino, and said that I wondered he wasn't in the Cercle, and asked him the reason that he could keep away from the cards. "Monsieur," he replied, "I have great experience with cards. There are two hundred and forty-six combinations in which the cards can be arranged; I know two hundred and forty-four

CASINO GAMES

of them; I do not go in because I am ignorant of the other two.”

I have often wondered that such an attractive place as Boulogne-sur-Mer does not keep open more months than the usual three from the middle of June till the middle of October, with the few days at Easter and Whitsuntide. When it is considered that there is as much fun to be had for the gambler as there is by going long distances, it is incredible that three times the number of people do not rush across the Channel. The great charm about it is that Boulogne is only three hours from London, and that there is a splendid service into the bargain. I have seen a good many foreign health resorts and their casinos, but nowhere that I can remember is there such an admirable *personnel* as in the “*Cercle Privé*.” The head of the administration is that courtly gentleman, M. de St André; he is indicative of the way everything is run. No one can be guaranteed against losing their money, but everything is *dead straight* there, and that is the reason of its success.

Few have an idea what restrictions are placed round a concession such as that obtained by a casino from the municipality with the consent of a responsible Minister of State. To begin with, the dates of opening and closing are strictly laid down. Boulogne, for instance, has to give a certain number of days at Easter and Whitsuntide, and whatever the weather, and however little the encouragement, has to open their doors on June 15th and has to keep open till a certain date in October. Then for the good of the townspeople entertainments and music have to be provided, so that the individual with only a small sum to spend—and not a gambler—has to be catered for. Of course profits are large; still, expenses are



AT A CONTINENTAL CASINO
The Cercle Privé at Boulogne



“HEADS” IN PARIS

enormous in the way of upkeep, payment to artists, orchestras and staff. It is interesting to imagine how many people would be at a place like Bexhill or Eastbourne if there were the same attractions as there are, say, at Boulogne, Dieppe, Biarritz and kindred places. I do not think any Government will ever wish to bring about a change in France. In Belgium it has been one continual fight, and the difficulty Ostend has laboured under is that so many visitors have gone there only to find the rooms shut temporarily. It meant, if it had lasted, the death of property holders in the Belgian town; however, some of the difficulties have been got over. Spa and other places have been great sufferers by the process of law.

For a long time in Paris—I am talking of fourteen or fifteen years ago—there was an influx of American “heads” into the city, whose operations were chiefly on the race-track. For the most part they were an open-hearted, cheerful and well-dressed crowd. I had heard of one or two of them, but had never met any prior to this. Really it was difficult to tell who was who, and which was the sharp and which the flat. There were so many at one time that it was really extraordinary how they could make their living, yet they did, until the whole game became too hot. I will give an instance of not knowing the difference to begin with. A man about thirty came to me one day saying: “Do you think this No. 6 has any chance, sir? You’ll excuse me asking you, but I don’t speak French, and as I’m an American, and you are on the *Herald*, that must be my apology for speaking to you.”

Looking at the card I saw that No. 6 was a notorious horse who had nearly broken the hearts of his owner and trainer through never attempting to get over more than two fences. He would refuse, and no amount

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of persuasion or stick would make him face it. I told him this. "But he doesn't fall?" he asked, and I told him no.

There were only four runners, and he told me that he had ascertained No. 5 was favourite. "What about this No. 3?" he then queried. "If it were a hurdle race, yes," I explained; "but he'll never go over the water." There was only one other to discuss. That was No. 1 on the card. Through a long season he had never been placed, and had been patched up for this event just on an off chance. It therefore seemed any odds on the favourite, who was rather a useful horse, and I told him so. He thanked me profusely and went off to join his companion, an accentuated type of elderly American. The younger man left the other after a minute and went towards the ring. It was before bookmakers were abolished.

I didn't think any more of it at all until after the race. The favourite made a very bad peck on landing over the water, which seemed thoroughly to demoralise him, and No. 6, the brute who had never been known for twelve months to go the course, had for some extraordinary reason raced away to the front—they were trying a new jockey that day—and with the other two dropping out all he had to do was to keep on. But he shut up like a knife in the run in from the last fence and the favourite, who had made up a lot of ground, just won a neck. About ten minutes afterwards the older of the pair came round the corner of the stand face to face with me. He also made an apology for speaking to me and added: "I nearly have to thank you for a very big win. I had five hundred dollars on that No. 6, and should have won five thousand. Did you ever see anything like it, only just beaten? *You were the only one to fancy him,*"

PITCHING THE TALE

he proceeded. "My friend would not let me back the winner after a favourable opinion you had expressed concerning No. 6. We had our money on him. Now tip me a hopeless horse to give him in revenge." It was puzzling.

It was the same dear old story. I didn't mind who spoke to me, but my reputation wouldn't stand being quoted as tipping a horse who wasn't on the map. You might as well have taken the commonest selling hurdler and advised backing him for a Grand National. I passed on, saying something to the effect of "better luck next time." I wasn't going to be drawn into giving advice. I heard the story afterwards. The old fellow had come over in the "boat" with the younger one, it was his one and only experience on a European racecourse. The next morning I saw the two in the Grand Hotel, where they were joined by a third, also one of the "lads," who was paid nearly ten thousand francs in cash by the patriarchal sportsman. He took it very well, and never squealed. One afternoon I ran across him near the Chatham bar, and he told me he was leaving Paris the next day, and asked me to have a bottle of wine with him, as he had been "pleased to meet me." He told me that he had hoped to remain in Europe longer than he had, but through an unfortunate speculation his money had become limited. He added that he did not wish to say anything, but simply that he had lost his money on the race-track. He had his own views, he added. Warming under the wine, however, he put the point-blank question whether I thought he would have received his money if he had won it? But I played for safety, and suggested that it was no good going into such hypothetical questions. "You didn't win, so there's an end to the matter." And he

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seemed to regret having asked at all. What is the use of being a policeman? Let everyone look after themselves, and surely Americans should know their own countrymen better than one of a different nation can be expected to.

CHAPTER XXVIII

AT WORK ON THE RACE-TRACKS

American Invasion—Taking One on—A *Coup* of Seven Thousand Pounds—A Napoleonic "Stroke"—Arriving too late to settle—Dodging Bogey Bookmakers

DURING all that season and the next, because I happened to be the sporting writer on the *Herald*, all sorts of leading questions were put to me. You see, I knew nearly everyone, but they would never get any change out of me and this was appreciated, I think, on both sides. A journalist cannot be the superior person, for one never knows when information can be procured, and I will say this, that one or two of the leading sportsmen from the other side were met through being on speaking terms with the "boys" who were working the race-tracks.

It is almost incredible that a little *coup* whereby seven thousand pounds English was paid over was brought off in a small hotel in Paris. The loser was a South American of charming manners. Simply he had the tale pitched to him and believed it. Three big races, two in England and one in France, were named. On the two English events twenty-five hundred pounds each was to be invested and two thousand pounds on the big event at Longchamp. It really was so simple. The names of horses were wired from London, the "commissioner" having a twenty-four-hour trip there and back. It hadn't come off! The next thing was to see whether the "mug" parted. He did, and at the same time that he took

AT WORK ON THE RACE-TRACKS

the money to the small hotel I know of, he brought an exquisite bunch of flowers for the wife of his racing friend. The other two thousand was paid with equal promptitude, but after that the South American visitor thought he had experienced quite sufficient of racing in Europe. But never a quarrel, no upbraiding, simply he extended his sympathy to the exploiter of him for *his* great loss, which he thought in his blindness was of the same amount as he himself had dropped.

Of course this sum cannot be compared to some of the great exploits over cards or the box or other fancy ways of transferring money from one gentleman's pocket to another, but surely nothing was ever done with such perfect ease. No travelling half way round the world at enormous expense to track a man who was "easy"; no expensive dinners nor flash suites in swell hotels, no unnecessary flattery nor sitting up in the morning drinking unnecessary wine: simply a quiet business talk that "A" being in the secrets of certain stables, and a close friend of certain American jockeys, it would be a pity if "B" missed the chance of three events to be brought off which should rival the half-million dollars won by Gates and Drake over Royal Flush (I have alluded to this in a previous chapter).

They were tryers, some of them; they even came it on me, a pair of new-comers who were thoroughly laughed at, in fact, roasted about it by their pals—I am telling a lot of you what you know already I'm sure, but others are not so wise. I was looking at the numbers which had just been put up and saw a man in front of me copying down the figures at one of the pari-mutuel *guichets*. I was regarding him rather curiously, as I had not seen him out racing before, when a man at my elbow whispered: "Follow that man;

TOUCHING A PACKET

don't leave him for a minute if you can help it. He does all the commissions for the American jockeys. If you see what he backs, or can get to talk to him, let me know and we'll win a packet." Some years before I might have listened: however, I had just been elated over backing a winner, and was rude enough to laugh in his face. He looked like showing his teeth, but laughed himself and walked away. But it came off, I can tell you, on a great many occasions with others, but your Uncle Dudley had experienced *some* in his green days years before.

It is doubtful whether any of them ever made a shilling after dinner-time, those they met being chiefly their own friends; and pleasure-loving Paris attracts all the foreigners to dinners, suppers and talk. Besides which, if a man wanted to gamble he had no need to play in a private room; there was the attraction if desired at the clubs, as I have explained.

The Ring was taken on very cleverly once or twice; it was usually through an introduction, this being engineered very cleverly. There was one man who had three successive winning weeks, the first was six thousand louis, the second about three thousand, and the third not quite so much. Then he plumped down, owing five thousand (one hundred thousand francs). He bought a car with some of the ready he had left, and left Paris. Yes, the ring had indeed one or two jolts.

The most extraordinary case, but not suggested in any way by the playful little games I have recounted, was that of a foreign owner who "delayed himself" in getting to the course one Sunday, on which day the weekly settling took place. No bookmaker was allowed to accept any money when the numbers went up for the first race. It was a very strict rule, drafted,

AT WORK ON THE RACE-TRACKS

of course, for obvious reasons, that there should be no ready-money betting except in the *pari-mutuel*. The backer rushed in five minutes after it was too late to pay, with a big wad of notes, and flashed these in the faces of one or two he owed money to. As a matter of fact he had to pay about forty thousand francs, and actually had about thirty thousand francs on him; but don't you see, if he had been in time to settle, *his money would not have gone round*. He demurred that they would not take his money, and one or two must have felt inclined to incur the risk. However, they resisted it, and the backer seemed very much put out. Would you believe it, he wiped them all off that day, and had forty thousand in his favour? He backed a five-to-one chance to begin with; of course they stood him all right. With the twenty thousand francs he won over the first race he backed three winners, afterwards, in one case, laying fifty thousand to forty thousand francs on, which came off. He lost a bit after that, but, as I say, cleaned up eighty thousand francs, or thirty-two hundred pounds, to the good. I am putting this in, but would make it clear that not the slightest fraud was intended: he was simply short of the money that day; but it was a master stroke of a master mind in dealing with a pressing situation.

There was an Englishman there, very young, who knew very little about racing, but he was somehow introduced to two bookmakers. The "boys" used to buttonhole him with tips, but I heard that he had not dropped any ready, and later I saw him betting on credit with at least two. He was living at an expensive hotel, but somehow he did not strike me as being particularly full of brass. He would bet in twenties and thirties during that week in which he dawned on us. We became curious, I suppose, about our own

HOW TO TOUCH

countryman, and I was wondering what would happen at the Sunday settling, but I did not hear the strength of it until later. He had to receive five thousand francs from one man, and owed another over seven thousand francs. They managed it all right—at least, one of his American advisers did, for they knew the strength of it. They sent someone to talk very earnestly with the bookmaker who had to receive, while the English sucker, who by the way had soon cut his wisdom teeth, went and lifted his bit from the other. It was quite easy to go and spend the rest of the afternoon in the *pavillon* (five-franc enclosure)!

There is a very well-known professional racing man in England who can tell some funny stories about experiences as to collecting a bit when heavily in debt. One incident in particular I can remember quite well, and may as well put it in here. There was immediate necessity for "A" to have a bit of ready: he owed a very large sum over the previous week, and on Saturday and Sunday the situation was reviewed. He owed sixty-eight pounds to one, seventy-eight pounds to another, a hundred and thirty-nine pounds to a third, forty-two pounds to a "book" he had had no previous transactions with, seventy-six pounds to another unsympathetic person, and ninety-four pounds to a man who stood too prominently in the ring to avoid. Newmarket began on the Tuesday, and there was only one man to draw a bit from, sixty pounds, but his address was unknown, to send a claim to. This man lived somewhere in the Midlands, and it was any odds that he would be at a local hunt meeting on the Monday, and so would two of the bogeys be too. The question was, how to avoid the two latter, touch the sixty and take a chance with it. "A" determined to go to that meeting. He arranged the time

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admirably, arriving in the ring about five minutes to two. It was well filled, and he could take a safe survey of it. There, near him, was the man who had to pay him. How could he manage to get at him? The first event was a selling race, and it was any odds that the principal creditor would go into the sale-room afterwards and see if he could secure a bargain. Near the needy one was a man he knew very well, who would do little things to oblige an acquaintance, so "A" readied him. When they had passed the post, in went the bookmaker to see what the winner would fetch, and here was the chance. Pointing out the clerk, who was standing by himself, the hunter after the sixty said, pointing to the bookmaker's clerk: "Go and ask him what he'll lay you Success for the Cesarewitch. I'll tell you something when you come back. Fence about with him a bit, asking the price of one or two others first."

It came off. The argument was a long one between the clerk and the emissary. "A" popped down and, keeping to leeward of the man from whom the sixty pounds was to come, touched the notes; the bank-roll had only been two or three pounds before that. Forty pounds was put carefully in the inner pocket to keep for Newmarket, and the balance of twenty-two was turned into seventy before the day was out. It was a hopeful feeling starting the next day with over a hundred; but still the ghosts had to be dodged, and the only thing to do was to arrive late again and give a chance to fifty for the first race. As luck would have it, on the way out to the course he met a jockey trying to get a bit of weight off. He said to "A": "You are a very lucky man to have met me, for I can give you the winner of the first race," and he did, a six-to-one chance. Not content with the fifty, he put an extra

EARNING CREDIT

thirty on at five to one. He never forgot the experience, for it looked at one time that the day would have to be brazened out, for his horse, who was very lazy, made a slow beginning. A hundred and fifty yards from home he was still a couple of lengths behind, with the favourite going smoothly. On they came, and only fifty yards to go. Then the favourite shut up, round went his tail and he swerved badly : the favourite was beaten by a neck. After the following race they were all paid and the credit was restored. The following Monday he had seven hundred pounds to the good on balance. This is a perfectly true story, and I daresay " A " would not mind me mentioning his name, but still, he might have to go through it again.

CHAPTER XXIX

EARLY AIRSHIP MAKERS

Santos Dumont—His Would-be Imitators—Getting financed—Those which refused to fly—Dreams told to me—Cause of Failures

IN Paris I came in touch a great deal with inventors of different kinds of aircraft, some which flew, others which never got far beyond the sheds in which they were constructed. It was rather pitiable to observe the blind confidence of some of the promoting engineering inventors. Their optimism about their own theories was sublime. It was no use suggesting that perhaps they would not realise their hopes, and that a great deal more had to be done before the conquest of the air would be completed. I must confess that at that time I was generally sceptical as to anything attaining the possibilities of the model of to-day. It was so obvious that many of them were destined to failure, and the men who were trying were of the type who never achieve anything.

The chief examples of those I saw were in the neighbourhood of Paris. Journeys by motor car and train, and then long tramps to outlying places, made me occasionally regret that the inventors were not locked up in asylums. Still, I had to go through with it. Santos Dumont attained a good deal, and, of course, he was the single one who did demonstrate something. He was always a great aeronaut and fearless into the bargain. I happened to be at St Cloud one day when Lord Northcliffe was also present. On that day Santos Dumont *did* fly in the teeth of the wind, and the

A FLYING FINANCIER

newspaper magnate became a believer in the possibilities and has been the pioneer in encouragement since.

There was one man who was constantly sending me telegrams that an ascent would positively take place the next day. He was a chap who had raised every penny he could to perfect his machine. Occasionally, when money ran short, he would go back and work as a mechanical engineer, cheese-paring for weeks until he could scrape enough together to go on with certain improvements to the monster, which was in a rough shed in the outlying districts of the French capital—near Nogent-sur-Marne. With him was what I might call a “financier of the exterior boulevards.” This man weighed about eighteen stone, and was only about five feet six in height. He wore a frock-coat and a curious top hat, and was altogether a type of musical comedy. He had great ideas of exploiting the company to work the great flying ship which was one day to make its preliminary ascent. I think that he had found a few hundred pounds. He did not seem to care a jot about the ship itself, but told delightful stories as to what it could do, and then would cast his eye round for those likely to finance it. I always knew when they had done “a touch,” for half-a-dozen workmen would be put on; the stout gentleman of high finance would eat at a restaurant in the *grands boulevards*, and he seemed to swell more than ever; and at this period the lean inventor, I believe, really *did* eat. It never seemed to do him much good, but he became more earnest than ever.

I am by no means a perfect linguist, and when in the evening a tall, cavernous-cheeked man would come and talk to me at over two hundred words a minute, I really had to ask him to slow down, so that I could understand him better. He was a provincial, and if

EARLY AIRSHIP MAKERS

you can imagine a Frenchman listening to Lancashire patter, perhaps you can appreciate the difficulty I had to follow what my amiable friend had to tell me. He was imaginative too. We would be walking along on the gardens side of the Rue de Rivoli and he would point to the stars on a clear night saying: "Ah! in six months you and I will not be fanning ourselves down here, but taking a run of fifty miles and back to get the air, filling our lungs with heaven's breath. We shall sleep properly then, camarade." In his moments of ecstasy he would speak deliberately.

On occasions the *banquier* would join him. He was not so imaginative. He would want introductions to rich racing men in order to place founders' shares. It was quite easy to put him off by saying that I would consider it. Needless to say, it never went beyond that stage.

I will pass over the various trials to one day when it was to be the real flight. Arrived out at the place, in a large field was the mammoth machine with its big sails and flapping wings, all to be controlled by the sixteen-horse-power motor. Above, not quite inflated, was a large egg-shaped balloon, which was to raise the mass of machinery, car, etc., from the ground. Slowly wrinkles smoothed out and the envelope became full. The inventor ran round, telling us to keep clear, only those in charge of the heavy sandbags being left by the machine. Little children ran away—peeping from behind trees. They were scared by the combination of elephant, whale and crocodile, whether of the air or earth they did not know. Talk about the "Birdless Grove" at Goodwood—there was not a winged creature within a league.

At last the balloon was filled, and we all waited with bated breath. The inventor and the financier got into

CARRYING OVERWEIGHT

the car. Slowly the weights holding the machine to the ground were taken away. "Le Cadavre" had control of the lever and the steering wheel, and we all waited. I took out my race-glasses so that I could follow the flight. The bags had nearly all gone by this time. *Enfin!* But it moved not! A torrent of words from the dreamer—three hundred and fifty a minute, I should think—and he flew into a towering rage with the financier. How could the thing go up with that mountain of flesh in the car? It was necessary, evidently, to put some more bags on, so that the thing should not fly up when "tubby" stepped out. We lifted the "Chancellor" out, and then the bags were released once more. It stuck fast. We tried lifting the car and machinery so as to assist it, and cut away part of the superfluous platform, but it was no good; it declared quite half-a-ton overweight. There were no tears, no undue excitement. Still optimism reigned. Giving rapid instructions, the balloon was detached and allowed to deflate itself. He wished to show that the wings could propel it, so it was brought out into the road: I must explain that it was on wheels. The motor set it off and it ran at quite a mile an hour, the great wings flapping and causing it to proceed down a slight decline. The inventor was ecstatic. "You see," he said, "in case of storm we can descend to earth, pack up the balloon and—motor home; in fact, I believe it will revolutionise motoring."

What was the end of it? A sale of scrap iron, a tired man doing two days a week to keep body and soul together, a deadly feud against the financier who handled all the boodle, and a permanent hard-luck recital and desperate conviction that he had never had a fair chance.

Another inventor was of quite a different type.

EARLY AIRSHIP MAKERS

A delightful old gentleman with perfect manners, named M. Roze, who would have graced any Cabinet in France. He had an enormous installation in another part of Paris. There was a completeness of detail, a perfect engineering shop, and a well-built garage for his ship which made one talk to him with bated breath. There was something about him which precluded me from ever raising a doubt. He had one bar to success, which was that he could not understand that a pound of aluminium weighed just the same as a pound of feathers. By the time I first met him his ship, which was quite a hundred feet long, had cost many thousands of pounds. They had just raised another fifteen hundred pounds on second debentures, or something or other, and in three months, he had reckoned, all would be well. The cabin was beautifully fitted up, and on the top was a hurricane deck. We ascended the companion-way from the saloon and went up. For ventilating purposes a huge panel was open to the roof. Looking upward I could realise what it would be like when we were really above the earth. He mapped out our first itinerary. He reckoned with favourable breezes—right aft or on the quarter—we could go seventy miles an hour, and even with a breeze abaft the beam we could beat the Orient express to Vienna by hours.

A cabin was assigned to me, and my place at the dinner-table. The slight nautical knowledge I possessed appealed to him, and he had told me I could be his honorary first officer. There would be no bar to smoking, I was glad to hear, as the gas bags were enclosed in aluminium cylinders. He was delightfully picturesque in appearance, and it was inevitable to conjure up recollections of the creations of Jules Verne. Here at last was the man whom the writer of

AN ALUMINIUM SALE

romance had anticipated. Aerial navigation was at last possible. There was nothing shoddy: it was not necessary to spare expense. The whole thing was solid; alas, too solid!

It seemed absurd to leave that enormous shed and walk to the station. I felt almost inclined to wait there with him. With two glasses of absinthe I trod on air with him. I am certain that my enthusiasm was infectious, and I am afraid that I have a lot to answer for in making him more optimistic than ever. The fate of it I was not there to see. I believe there was a great day. Whatever its success might have been, it was, like most of the others, a ton too heavy. What happened to it? Well, aluminium fetches more by the pound than iron does. The inventor had come to the end of his tether as regards finance. Was he daunted? not a bit of it. The day after his failure he discovered everything which was wrong, but there was no more money to continue experiments with. He was on the right tack, probably as near as Count Zeppelin. The latter was fortunate in having the assistance of the King of Würtemberg, and other inventors have had considerable private means or backing. Well, we all dream occasionally, although the awakening can be pathetic. I was stupid, however, in my disbelief of what could be done in the air. I was one of the first at seeing all there was to be seen. It was more in the spirit of writing a good newspaper story than anything which caused me to pretend belief in the future of flying. We can all be absurdly behind the times and incredulous at times. Nevertheless, I do not think even such an authority as Santos Dumont ever believed we should have accomplished so much in this way by 1914. This chapter may be read with special interest in fifty years' time.



PART II



CHAPTER XXX

START ON THE *DAILY EXPRESS*

Engaged as Sporting Editor—Recommendation for Journalism—
Attracting the Racing Man

IT will always be reckoned a great stepping-stone in my journalistic career when, after leaving Paris, I joined the *Daily Express*. At that time the paper was doing perhaps not more than one hundred and forty thousand a day, so it is permissible to think that my efforts had a great deal to do with one of the most successful papers in modern journalism. Early in 1899 Mr C. Arthur Pearson had decided on bringing out a halfpenny daily which should prove as attractive as the *Daily Mail*. I had been to Henrietta Street in 1899 trying to sell him the little theatrical paper I have spoken of—the *Queue*. Mr Kessell, who is still the secretary of the Daily Express Co., had been associated with Mr Pearson ever since the latter broke away from the late Sir George Newnes and started on his own. There were several interviews with Kessell, and when I saw the sale of my rag was fruitless I tried to get a job on the new paper; but there was nothing, so it had to be left until a year or two later. Thus I became sporting editor of the *Express*, and wrote the racing article, under the *nom de plume* of "The Scout," which position I held for ten years, until I had the wandering fever on me and resigned.

While associated with Mr Pearson I also wrote under the name of "Magistral," when he acquired the *St James's Gazette*, and when this paper was amalgamated

START ON THE *DAILY EXPRESS*

I wrote "Turf Topics," and for a time in the *Morning Standard* as well the "Asmodeus" article.

This is the outline of a decade during which many other experiences will be related which may be a guide to younger men. The ups and downs of fortune will be alluded to, and an explanation of how I have always been a greater success for others than in my own ventures. It will not be an excuse—nor is any part of this book—for the whole thing is merely a record of a career from which you can make your own deductions. Why is there the craze to launch out into speculations of our own? Some men are very much better salary-earners than profit-makers when they are in control. It is chiefly because there is the spur when there is a daily responsibility to satisfy both the public and a critical editor and proprietor. Journalism is an excellent thing for young men, and perhaps there may be some useful pointers for those who are undecided as to their career, but there should be no delusion as to taking a chance without experience or training, for I can tell you with present-day competition a man earning a salary in the newspaper world has to deliver the goods.

Through my former acquaintance, Kessell, I had several interviews with Mr Pearson, and the whole thing had been fixed up. It is here that I would suggest to journalists who have done any particularly good work in the way of signed articles to keep a series of newspaper cuttings; they may then be able, apart from any reputation they may have, to show how versatile they can be, and my book of cuttings was a make-weight for me going to Tudor Street.

There was an immediate change made in various features of the sporting page, and this step by step led to the increasing popularity of what my department

RACING FEATURES

turned out to attract readers. It has often been very refreshing to get into a crowded railway carriage and see several reading what has been written for them by me. I had always had the idea that a great thing with regard to racing articles was to keep them up to the same length during the winter. The racing man wants his column, as others will look for the continuation of a serial story, or the woman for her fashions, or again the football fanatic for his entertainment. When there has been no racing on occasions I have looked to see what contemporaries were doing in the way of sporting news, and have seen that sometimes there was only a short paragraph, or even nothing at all, about racing. That is the very moment when a little bit extra should be provided for a reader of turf topics. On a racing day he has racing programmes and the book form to study, but even then will always read the racing article. You see my point about the necessity to keep him amused. That may account to an extent for a paper's success, for there is no doubt there are tens of thousands of halfpenny newspaper readers who cannot discriminate between the way the ordinary news is served up to them perhaps in different styles. Then the shipping news, the Stock Exchange, cricket scores, racing results are all the same, and a murder trial or a railway mystery is still all the same, whichever paper is read. But that same individual may be very critical yet appreciative of what is told him concerning the turf. Yes, indeed, racing is before any other sport in attracting a big circulation. Advertising managers have a way of saying that a circulation through sporting news is no good to a paper; well, one has to put up with their excuses for not being able to get all the business there is about. But I should like to see a daily paper

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nowadays run unless they splashed sporting news. Various big men who had the say about what their papers should contain have tried to cut down sport, but with disastrous results—ask Mr Kennedy Jones.

CHAPTER XXXI

SUCCESSFUL TIPPING

The "Awful Example"—Topping the List—Spearmint's Trial—Franklin's Earnestness—Incredulity about Gallop—Haggling for a Price—Great Horses of 1906—Dillon's Ride at Longchamp

OF course successful tipping can help a paper, and I have to thank the *Daily News* for publishing certain figures at the end of two or three racing seasons which had been compiled by or for Canon Horsley. These statistics were published to show how futile it was for anyone to take up betting on horse racing; and then followed, in the order of profit or loss, a list of the daily papers and their tips. The *Express* was at the top of the list for three seasons, and then the feature in the *Daily News* was dropped. It may not be in good taste, but I must say it, as I am only going by the statistics of anti-gamblers, but I was the only one in one season to show a profit at all, the others all coming out at a loss. This is just as it happened, for I do not claim second sight, although there have been curious intuitions on occasions. Another point about it is that I have always been prepared to stick to my own opinions even when a horse was at long odds, and there was little encouragement from others to support him, and a success in this direction helps the record of winning points. After an outsider has won a race one of my *confrères* has frequently come up to me and said: "I suppose that's one of yours, isn't it?" It is such a satisfaction when an affirmative answer can be given. Of course with anyone giving tips there has to be a

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very quick decision and the capacity to accept or put aside the information supplied. A case in point was in 1906, Spearmint's year.

My Newmarket correspondent, Archibald Franklin, telephoned to me one evening from Newmarket that he was coming up that night as he wanted to see me very particularly. The appointment was made, and he arrived soon after ten o'clock. I could see there was something rather extraordinary to be told me. Thereupon he gave me every detail of the gallop he had seen that morning between Spearmint and Pretty Polly, and how the Derby candidate had held the great mare. "Mind you," he added, "I want you to take this from me. I am *quite* prepared for others not accepting what I have told you as correct, for they will not understand that it is possible for a three-year-old at a difference of anything under two stone to be able to go with Polly. Already they are turning it down at Newmarket, for the simple reason that they didn't see the gallop! Some of the touts were at home, and others on the other side of the town, where some good work was being done. Now what I want to tell you is," he emphasised, "that *I have seen the winner of the Derby*; nothing can beat him." He added that he didn't know the exact weight between them, but he didn't think for a moment there was more than a difference of twenty pounds, if as much.

Now Franklin is a very good judge of racing; he has his in-and-out spells of luck, but it never affects his clear vision of what is likely to happen. He will argue, yes, and is as dogmatic as those he comes in touch with, but he has the canny characteristics of his native county of Yorkshire when seriously considering an important topic. It was an intuition to accept his judgment, and straight away Spearmint was taken as a

A "LIMEKILNS" GALLOP

Derby selection. I had liked the colt very much as a two-year-old, and had seen the possibilities in him. Then came the "downcoursing" of Franklin's and my own statements. Those who had not seen the trial pooh-poohed it and the public were in a tangle which to believe.

I had made up my mind to win a thousand over the race and, mind you, with the contradictory stories about that gallop on the Limekilns the price still remained extended. I went down to Gatwick some weeks before the race with Sir Ernest Cochrane. I had heard of the second gallop they had given Spearmint with Pretty Polly, as the first could scarcely be credited even by the stable. I asked the Irish baronet to go on and "see what they will all lay you; have a good win over Spearmint. Take a thousand to thirty for me." He made a little pilgrimage to the rails and presently we met again. He said: "They will lay only a thousand to forty, and in any case I have spoken to Mr Bird, and he tells me that Flair is their horse for the Derby and Spearmint is intended for the Grand Prix." As a matter of fact those were exactly the intentions at the moment. Flair had won the One Thousand and was one of the best fillies ever in training. It was intended that Spearmint should be in reserve for the great race in Paris. Mr Bird was connected with Mr Gilpin's stable; in fact, until a few years ago had a very important managerial status at Clarehaven. What was I to do, therefore? It was a question of waiting. At a meeting the following week I endeavoured to get a thousand to forty: five hundred to twenty myself and five hundred to twenty through a friend, but they would only lay twenty to one. A few days later, waking up in the middle of the night after having written for that morning's paper an unusually

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strong article in favour of Spearmint, there was the terrible feeling that I did not stand to win a penny if the colt won. I was frantic, therefore, the next afternoon to accept five hundred to twenty-five, but the best offer available was a hundred to six. Inwardly cursing their lack of enterprise the matter was left. In the meantime Sarcelle had won the Payne Stakes, and at Romano's one night I heard what was really true, and have since had it confirmed from Mr W. B. Purefoy, that at home Lally was twenty-one pounds in front of Sarcelle. I did not take the tip for Lally, but took forty to one about Troutbeck to go on with, waiting for Spearmint to be at slightly longer odds. It only shows you what a fool a man can be.

From a hundred to six Spearmint shortened to a hundred to seven, a hundred to eight, and then less, and I hadn't a shilling on him. I met a man one day, after another half-column begging the public to back Spearmint, and he remarked: "I suppose you stand to win a packet? Well, you appear right about him at all events," for by this time there were other writers in favour of the colt. They had caught the infection. But why prolong the agony which I suffered eventually over Spearmint. You will scarcely believe it that I did not have a shilling on him till the night before the race. I was at a turf dinner at the Gaiety Restaurant, and took fifty-five pounds to ten from Thomas Henry Dey and fifty pounds to ten after midnight. I also backed him for about the same amount at starting price, and had an extra fiver on Troutbeck for a place. In the way I was betting in those days I should have been on easy street in the way of finance for many years. But no; I cleaned up a little over two hundred pounds, which is money, but I have despised myself ever since for being too greedy.



H. J. BROWN, PHOTOG.

SPEARMENT IN TRAINING
Winner of the Derby and Grand Prix in 1906



SPEARMINT : (NAP)

I daren't tell Franklin at the time how ridiculous a figure I had cut, but he will know now. By the way he himself has wagered on various occasions I think he felt inclined to smack his own face, for I do not think he won quite a thousand, yet others benefited by his advice and did not look after him in the way that he had a right to expect. In fact, I have heard—not from Franklin—of one man who got on at thirty-three to one and only returned him a hundred to six. Of course it was a great triumph for the *Express*, as there was only one thing to do on the day of the race, to “nap” Spearmint; and I gave Troutbeck for a place. The latter made the pace a cracker, and looked like a winner until the distance, when Picton came upsides with him, and then Danny set Spearmint going and I shall always think that he won more easily than many afterwards gave him credit for doing. It was one of the greatest fields that ever ran for a Derby, as quite seven of those who finished behind the winner turned out wonderfully afterwards. The White Knight was unplaced, and so was Radium, also Beppo and Lally. Troutbeck afterwards won the St Leger. Picton has turned out a great sire, and surely Lally has proved himself.

There was one most pathetic incident after the race. I saw Mr Purefoy standing alone; he was avoiding his fellow-man; tears were in his eyes. He is sportsman enough to take a reverse, but I shall always think that it was a deep regret that he had been so optimistic about Lally. His emotions were those of a man who dearly loves a horse, and he really had, by what had transpired, a certainty which would come off in nineteen years out of twenty. The fact that a special supper had been ordered at Romano's, in which restaurant Mr Purefoy has a big financial interest,

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need not be referred to, but that was one of the aftermaths of his chagrin. There were other men with runners in that memorable Derby who had mixed feelings after the race. Colonel Hall Walker has written to me that he thinks the best horse he ever owned was Black Arrow, who was also unplaced in the race. Black Arrow was in his day a phenomenal colt, but when he died eventually it was discovered from the autopsy that it was a wonder he could have raced at all. I forget exactly what it was, a tumour, if I remember rightly. We all know what The White Knight did; the greatest cup horse we had for years. Having a long talk with William Waugh some years after the race he told me what an unlucky man he thought himself not to win the Derby that year; but Troutbeck certainly finished third. He had done nothing as a two-year-old, but had an unbroken sequence of successes as a three-year-old prior to the Derby. But they can all talk, and one cannot help respecting their opinions; for, as I have said, there were many horses that year which would have won a Derby in an ordinary year, but there was something in the atmosphere or in the stars which caused the horses which were foaled in 1903 to be equal to that of a comet vintage in wines. Spearmint was the dandy of them all, and would always have beaten them. Surely to heaven he proved this in the Grand Prix.

Bernard Dillon has described that race to me more than once, but surely those who remember it can recall the incidents. Nearly every jockey in the race had a go for Spearmint nearly all the way round that mile and seven furlongs, and goodness only knows what would have happened if Bernard had not kept his mount in front, as one after the other came for him. Unfortunately one was not able to bet properly

AT SEA WITH A WINNER

over that race, for Spearmint started at such a short price in the *pari-mutuel*. I went down to Folkestone the night before Spearmint was due to arrive there on his way over to Paris ; I had done the same stunt with Pretty Polly. They had chartered a special steamer to take Spearmint and his travelling companion, a very ordinary animal. My difficulty was how to get on the boat. I saw them both slung on board ; I had my ticket across all right by the regular boat and took a seat on the after hatch and nobody troubled me. That wonderful horse was munching a bit of green stuff just as a christian would eat a biscuit, and as I put my hand down his neck he dropped a bunch of the green in my hand. I had it framed afterwards with his picture. Glorious horse ! can he ever be forgotten !

CHAPTER XXXII

WHAT PRETTY POLLY WAS

Her Trial—A Successful Nap—The Hurricane Rush—Her Trip to Paris—Gold Cup Debacle—Mr Sol Joel's Gloves—He buys Polymelus—The Cambridgeshire *Coup*—Troutbeck's Leger—How we tried to buy Velocity

WHILE on the topic of Spearmint, mention must be made of Pretty Polly, with whom he was tried. This was another triumph for the *Express* and "The Scout," for I can claim that I was the only prophet on a daily paper in London to give Pretty Polly as a definite selection for the first race she won. I had been down to Newmarket and had heard of a gallop she had with Delaunay, then known as the Pet Colt. Mr Gilpin told me all about it afterwards. They had taken Pretty Polly out many a time, but could never get her to sweat. One Saturday morning they tried her with the Pet Colt, at a difference of about ten pounds, it was said, and she beat him a length, breaking out copiously until there was something to get off her when they took to rubbing her down. Mr Gilpin immediately wired for Major Loder—they "had something rather extraordinary," he thought. At all events, these latter details were not heard until afterwards. What I am dealing with is the tipping success with regard to Pretty Polly. I set her out in big letters and of course went to Sandown to see her run. At one time they offered a hundred to eight against her, but she finished up at about half these odds. I was not over-confident, but still did not back anything else, being content

“PRETTY POLLY STYLE”

with fifty to five, followed up by forty to five, as at that particular moment I was not what might be termed relatively “betting.” It will be a lasting memory how, owing to the heat or a slight haze, when the lot got away, we thought it was a false start. We saw something out one hundred yards in front by itself. But it was no false start, it was simply the incomparable Pretty Polly out by herself smashing up her field—which included John o’ Gaunt, if you please—and sailing home in what I designated on the following Monday, “Pretty Polly style.” It was a coined phrase, but one which was to become current. The only way I have seen races won since were those victories of the Tetrarch as a two-year-old. But Pretty Polly, save twice, was never pressed and—*place aux dames*—nothing has ever approached that form of hers.

She took such a hold of the public, and of myself, that I am sure I was not the only one to curse or cry the day she met with inexplicable defeat in the Prix du Conseil Municipal from Presto II., an ex-selling plater. I went down to Folkestone to the Pavilion Hotel the night before she was due to arrive. There was a howling gale; two ships were ashore within sight; the life-boat was out and the rocket apparatus rescuing Dutchmen (foreign sailors). This was nice weather, I thought, for a great race-horse to cross; for, knowing the sea for many years, there was the certainty that if the gale moderated there would be a bad swell after it.

The late Alec Waugh, one of the most delightful of men, had been asked to take charge of this priceless mare. The next day he determined that it was no day for her to go, this decision being arrived at when she was taken out of her box on arrival. But Waugh

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went to Boulogne and back to see how things really were. In the afternoon Pretty Polly and her traveling companion, a common bit of a thing, but with whom she was always happy, were taken out on the Sandgate Road—that lower track at the bottom of the Leas through the gate leading to Sandgate—and had a nice three-mile walk in her clothing. The mare was as jaunty as possible, but the passers-by little knew the celebrity who was promenading like an ordinary saddle hack; but she was a great lady, and just as well behaved. We saw her back to the box at Peden's stables at Folkestone, the same box which had once sheltered Gladiateur, who was the French horse to win the Derby before Durbar. It was brilliant sunshine when Polly crossed the next day, but that infernal swell had not subsided. Whether it was that, or what it was, Presto II. got away from her, and when it is said that Zinfandel, good horse as he was, could not get near the mare, I am afraid that the form must be taken as true and that Presto II. put in a freak performance on terrible going.

The only other defeat she had was in the Gold Cup of 1906. I hate laying odds on, but the day's expenses had to be won by laying five to two to a bit on her. "What have you backed?" said a near friend of Mr Sol Joel's. "Why, I have laid the odds on, of course," I replied. "I think you're wrong," he said; "for Danny says he is sure to win on Bachelor's Button." So straight away I covered the stake, getting seven to one about Maher's mount. Pretty Polly was, at the time, I don't say suffering, but was disfigured by a navicular wart and it was unsightly. The mare, in addition, appeared slightly lethargic. There was a curious stillness about everything; this may be a post-impression, but I do not think so. She came round

GOLD CUP TRAGEDY

the turn into the straight and we prepared for her to come away as usual. "Here she is," cried Mellish of the *Daily Mail*. "Come along, you beauty," growled John Corlett, and she appeared for a moment to be doing what we had always looked for her to accomplish; but suddenly it was seen that there was to be a race. Danny had waited most patiently for his run, and Bachelor's Button drew away. It was all over. It may have been the excitement, perhaps it was sentiment, but there was a handkerchief or two taken out, and not by women. Well, damn the excuses! Pretty Polly was beaten, and wasn't that enough to make one have a watered eye. There was no prouder man that day than Mr Sol Joel. One or two made a remark that he patted his favourite's neck with his gloved hand. Some people will always say the unpleasant word about anybody. It would have been more of an affectation to have taken off his glove which he always wears. The bet he had was as nothing; he gloried in the success of his great horse. But there will be other things to be said about Sol Joel on a racecourse.

In the last few pages there has been a good deal to say about the year 1906, indeed a very eventful one. There is another about which a lot can be said. I refer to Polymelus; indeed he was a proud possession for W. R. Baker, the Collingbourne trainer, to have in his stable. I always had an extraordinary opinion of this horse, thinking that he could stay, and was in a class distinctly by himself. He managed to run third in the Stewards' Cup and then second to Challacombe in the St Leger, but it was as a four-year-old I looked for him. I had an idea that he would win the City and Suburban in 1906, but someone approached me and said: "Get that out of your head as quickly as you

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can, for it is the worst course imaginable for him." And so it appeared, for he could not act at any part of the journey, sprawling down the hill. Well, that was a mistake, but nothing would shake me in the idea that Polymelus was one of the best horses I had ever seen. He came up for sale in the autumn, and his late owner had deputed someone to look after his interests. They thought that four thousand guineas would be a sufficient maximum to give to their bidder to buy him in. He reached this sum, and then there was hesitancy, and the amateur agent was nonplussed as to what to do. In the meantime, the bidding proceeding quickly, Mr Sol Joel secured this truly beautiful horse for, I think, four thousand three hundred guineas.

Things were not going too well when I had a dash on him for the Prince Edward Handicap, giving the advice in the *Express* that he was a horse to gamble on. He was just beaten by the three-year-old, Aurina. His weight in the Duke of York Stakes, the next event he ran in, was eight stone three, and he had eight stone in the Cambridgeshire. The Kempton Race was the first he figured in with the new colours, the pink and green of Mr S. B. Joel. Baker was very useful in advising Charles Peck as to what he knew about the horse. Ready was more desirable than ever in these autumn days, but I managed to take home a couple of hundred profit on Duke of York Stakes day. Directly Polymelus was weighed in I begged a man I knew to go in and get five thousand to four hundred about the horse for the Cambridgeshire. He had incurred a ten-pound penalty, which brought his weight up to eight stone ten. But what did it matter with a horse like that; a few pounds would make no matter.

While 1906 was a lucky year, still it was a terrible

MR SOL JOEL'S ANXIETY

series of mischances. I have told you how Spearmint was one of them and Polymelus the other foolishness—a missed chance. There was credit then, and plenty of ready, so why I couldn't take five hundred to forty—well after that I ought to take a "minder" and nurse with me. A wretched two hundred to twenty was all I got about Cambridgeshire, and then he began to shorten and I wouldn't have another copper on him, although esteeming his chance as something like a certainty. I was with Mr Sol Joel in the paddock before the race. He told me that he had just taken two thousand two hundred to two thousand more—really he had backed Polymelus to win him over sixty thousand pounds. He was in the corner of the paddock, and told me he had just left Maher, who told him not to be worried in the slightest until just below the distance—about three hundred yards from home. "That's where I shall come away," said Danny to me. "Well," added Mr Joel, "I hope to God he does; I think he'll win, in fact I am sure he will; at the same time it's a big thing I have on." Personally I had no doubt whatever that Polymelus was one of the best things ever seen, and so he proved, for Danny did just as he had said he would.

While on the topic of 1906 the success of Velocity in the Doncaster Cup was one of those anticipated certainties which mark a period in the season where things go with a bang. I thought he would win, but when I looked over the rails and saw him in the parade he had the stamp on him of a certainty, and some of the Troutbeck winnings in the St Leger—another nap—had to be played up on him. What a great horse he was, and what a pity he died! As a three-year-old three months before the race he nearly became the property of Sir Ernest Cochrane. He was staying in

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Brighton for the second week of the Sussex fortnight at the same time as myself. Velocity was to be put up at auction in Ireland. Sir Ernest had recently bought Flax Park for a little over three thousand guineas, but the sale did not come off, as the colt would not pass the vet. On consultation he wired offering two thousand five hundred pounds for Velocity; a telegram in reply declined this. In another hour or two another wire was sent offering three thousand, and then another negative. The Irish owner at Brighton knew the horse better than I did, and I could see that he was willing to back his opinion as he had just missed getting Sandboy for three thousand guineas, at Goodwood the previous week. At last he wrote out another wire expressing his willingness to give three thousand five hundred pounds, but back came the response that the horse must go up for sale. Sir Ernest Cochrane's blood was up and he would not have minded what price he paid, and another telegram was sent as to what price they would put on him. The reply wire was: "As said before the horse must go up for sale." As a matter of fact he was bought in for four thousand five hundred guineas. What ought to have been done was for the writer to have gone over and bid for him, for I believe he could have been bought for five thousand five hundred guineas, as he had done nothing in particular except run second for the Irish Derby. How he won the Cambridgeshire in the autumn of that year, winning a packet for everyone concerned with him, can be well remembered. In the following year Mr Peebles trained him. What a horse!—one of the best which ever ran in handicap class.

CHAPTER XXXIII

AMERICUS GIRL AND OTHERS

“ P.P.P.” and the Owner—Best on Turnpike going—Raking in Ready—Confidence over Ignorance—Preliminary Pow-wows—The Late Sir A. A. Apcar—Counsel with the Racing Mind

IN speaking of Mr Peebles, who trained Velocity, there are several incidents in connection with strongly expressed opinions in the *Express*, the inspiration for which came to an extent from this trainer. Not that he ever gave me an owner's confidence, but he would not be cryptic if I put a straight question. Mr Peebles is quite a personality. His father was a rich man, owning paper mills, and “ P.P.P ” had an early taste for horses, and was and is an excellent gentleman rider. He is particularly skilful with race-horses, as his record will show, but I am not out to write his life and experiences. There was many a pleasant little pow-wow over Americus Girl when she was winning all her races—he trained her. Mr Ledlie, her owner, lived, when in London, at the same hotel as I did for a long time, the Waldorf. Americus Girl was perhaps one of the most brilliant sprinters ever in training. She looked so beautiful, too, on nearly every occasion she ran. A beautiful rich chestnut, she had a strong dislike to anything in the way of heavy going. Mr Ledlie has on occasions walked to the front door of the hotel with me and looked up Aldwych saying: “ I wish they could run the race on this road: it would suit my mare.” Well, she had her bits of luck with regard to conditions on a racecourse, and usually profited by them.

AMERICUS GIRL AND OTHERS

Her races are too fresh in the memory to allude to fully, but the Portland Handicap at Doncaster, which she won in 1908, might be referred to. We knew in the morning that Maher had the mount, and at breakfast a man said to me: "I see you have napped Americus Girl to-day, but it so much depends on the draw, and surely it is going to rain." He was pulling my leg, for I had taken a violent liking to Mr Ledlie's filly and there was no half-expression of this when wiring my final notes on the previous evening. Mr Peebles was encountered in the paddock. It is not etiquette to go up to speak to either owner or trainer when they are talking together; it may be a conversation of much moment, and the bad taste of interrupting it is obvious. But Mr Ledlie was soon in evidence and said: "My mare is very well. I hope she will win." "P.P.P.," I could see, was sanguine, but not so emphatic. I had determined to do myself a bit of good over the race, and with the help of another doled out two's and three's and one or two fivers ready, getting ten to one about a chance I knew would shorten. Betting on the nod that week was not too convenient, except by winning at S. P., and I knew that that would mean sacrificing a lot, for she would not be a long shot at the finish, and what was the use of risking a tenner on a wire to stand to win thirty or forty pounds when more than twice the amount could be picked up by betting cash?

I managed to get fifty pounds to a fiver on the curtsy, bow or nod—which you like. That was most satisfactory. This was nearly all done on the "outskirts," which for the uninitiated can be explained as meaning bookmakers whose pitches are some distance from the bigger men. A well-known detective inspector, now retired, a charming fellow



A. H. LEDLIE

The good Irish sportsman : owner of Americus Girl



PAYING OFF A BIT

who, I am glad to see, has plenty of work in a private capacity in connection with racecourses, said: "Well, what is it to be?" I had only six pounds left, and the pass-book was "multy"—an Australian expression meaning rotten. "Go and get me fifty pounds to five at once Americus Girl if you can," I asked him, and knew that he would. Soon after up went the numbers, and she was at six to one, and in another minute or two we knew that Maher and Americus Girl were drawn No 1; on the rails it was difficult to get threes. Someone who knew I had backed her begged me for thirty pounds to ten pounds ready, and extending the bank-note I accommodated him, much against my convictions; still, a tenner ready and a well-hedged bet had its attractions. She won all the way, and there was a nice little finish for Doncaster, a "nap" in the *Express* and over two hundred and fifty pounds net for Willie!

It was a great week that, and there were a number I owed a bit to nearly had heart disease when, during the next few days, they got a cheque. Mr Peebles was quietly elated, but the owner had a tear or two of excitement in his eyes.

There was a mare named Ignorance trained by Peebles, and I happened to run across him some few days before the Champion Sprint at Hurst Park. I told him that I was going bald-headed for her. I didn't ask him for his opinion, the only point about her necessary to know being whether she was well. He convinced me on this point, knowing from experience that I would not ask him too many direct questions. She was never better, but day after day, without seeing him in the interim, I hammered away in the paper speaking about Ignorance for the race to be run on the following Saturday. Mind you, one stands to have a

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big tumble if, day after day, an expression of opinion is set out with such emphasis that there is no possible way of retracting it. But if it comes off there is all the more merit and—Ignorance *did* win. I met Peebles before the race and he said: "You are going a bit strong, aren't you? I've not made you do this. And you really think," he added, "that she will win? I can tell you," he went on, "that I have got her exactly to my liking." We did not see the race together, but that five minutes a quarter of an hour after the race was very pleasant, as she had started at seven to one, and was against some good horses that day.

One terrible disappointment with the same trainer was about a horse named Electric Boy, who appeared a semi-certainty at Hurst Park, but they put up a jockey who, we will say, did not ride with confidence that day, and Electric Boy was just beaten. It cost me a lot of money, and I must tell the reverse of the picture, for I had preached him for several days. He ought to have won a length.

Another little incident about tipping was Spate, who won the Manchester November Handicap in 1906. I happened to go into a lady's club to have tea, which in my case was a whisky-and-soda. After one or two interruptions my hostess suggested that I was going to have a long holiday, she supposed, as the next day was the last of the season. And then the inevitable topic arose as to what was going to win the big race on the following day. There was a lot of talk, and I remember that I took as my topic in the *Express* the next morning the terrible responsibility I had in recommending Spate to win the big race to three gentle souls. The worst of it was that they were so terribly in earnest, at least two of them, who plied me with questions as to the why and the wherefore

GREAT SCOT AND HIS OWNER

of the fancy. I could see that each was so dead serious that there was nothing to do but either to retract and be thought a wobbler, or to take a chance and be emphatic. I chose the latter and added as I left them: "If you read your *Express* to-morrow you will see that I do not take back a word of it."

So in went the whole conversation, and they were tickled to death and quite amused that no names were mentioned. Spate won at a hundred to seven, and furthermore Great Scot, who was given for a place, finished third. Many who knew the owner of the latter horse, Sir A. A. Apcar, then Mr Apcar, always regretted that he did not before his death make a long-promised visit to England. He won any number of Viceroy's Cups in Calcutta. Great Scot was bought by Mr Apcar in Australia; the horse was by Lochiel, and had an extraordinary career in India, not being sent over here until he was an aged horse. He had a splendid stride, but could never be got to quite his best, although he won a race at Lewes, ran second in the Derby Cup, and third at Manchester. Mr Apcar, by the way, was a great ornament to the turf in India. Possessed of much wealth, he could buy what he wished, although he never paid excessive prices. He was a prominent member of the Armenian community in Calcutta, and was the first cousin of Mrs Paul Valetta, mother of a prominent member of the Junior Bar, Mr J. P. Valetta. A sister of the latter, by the way, is Mrs Harold Chapin, wife of the rising dramatist. I might say that I have followed the career of the young counsel I have just named with considerable interest for many years. From the reports one reads in the papers, Mr Valetta has any amount of work; but here is a man well acquainted, like the late Mr Justice Bucknill, the late Lord Russell of Killowen, and many

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other prominent pleaders in their time, with many phases of life, and a thorough knowledge of the finer points of the turf. It has struck me in many celebrated cases which have been tried within my memory that on various occasions a good case has been prejudiced by the insufficiency of knowledge displayed by counsel in connection with the facts they have to handle. It is not always the particular weight with regard to prestige and seniority which wins *causes célèbres*, but that thorough acquaintance with those who participate in a world which may not be quite known by a certain minority. I can hear a quibble here, and some suggesting that I should say "majority"; nevertheless I am firmly convinced that nowadays it is the lesser number of the male population which is unacquainted with the greatest of all sports.

CHAPTER XXXIV

NEWSPAPER WINDOW-DRESSING

Systems' Syndicate with Arthur Collins and Harvey Du Cros—Busted—
The only Real Solution—My Sale of Cricket Bats—Race-horses
for Charity—Dam of an Oaks Winner for Twenty-three Guineas—
Sir Thomas Dewar and his Forgotten Horse—Lord Derby's Sug-
gestions—"The Walrus"

IN coming to the end of a season, as just referred to, there are occasions of great depression. There are the inevitable retrospects of missed chances, and a feeling of dullness that we are marking time for a month or two until there shall be some real form to make us take notice in view of the Grand National. In the winter there is a slack sort of feeling up to Christmas, which takes care of itself. It is quite all right if the bank-roll is respectable, but a disastrous back-end can lead to all sorts of inconveniences. This was the time, as I mentioned in an earlier chapter, that the public required amusing, and I used to look about for a feature which should entertain them. Systems became a topic which was always a drawing card, but I am afraid that I have been more than once hoisted very high in the air and come down with a flop after I had become ultra-enthusiastic about the results of one of my pets. I have studied them very closely, and on various occasions—on paper, mark you—they have worked remarkably. So much so that one evening a few years ago I happened to mention to Arthur Collins, of Drury Lane, and Harvey Du Cros, in answer to a question, that I believed I had discovered a real money-maker.

NEWSPAPER WINDOW-DRESSING

They appeared interested as much as I was myself. "Did you ever try it yourself?" asked Du Cros. "Only on paper," said I, and I was immediately reminded of a story I was told by my nurse—or somebody a great many years ago—about the old man who sold eels on a barrow. He had been on the same pitch for a quarter of a century. "They're very good," said a man eating them. "Very good," ejaculated the vendor. "Yes, particularly good," mumbled the eater, as he ordered another portion. "Will you try some with me—I mean at my expense?" "Do *you* know," said the fish merchant, "I've been selling them 'ere eels for five and twenty years and have never tasted them myself yet!"

Well, the question whether I had ever acted on my own on-paper-infallible systems was a poser, and I was driven to say in a moment of elation that I would certainly try it. "I wouldn't mind having a hundred on it," said Harvey Du Cros (we were at his flat). "And I'll put a hundred in," said Collins, "if you two boys will." So we had a little syndicate and the profits were to be paid out every week. Alas for the putting of a theory into practice: we were busted in about three weeks.

The system was well understood, for not only did it appear in the *Express*, but the typewritten copy of the principles were in triplicate—one for each—and all I had to do was to send off the latest horse for each race of the day before the first race, so that there should be no possible doubt whatever. They were very charming when the bank was done in, but, you know what I mean, there is a horrible sort of feeling about losing other people's money.

Systems *can* be worked, but oh, the difference between the theory and the practice! It really was

MR BELMONT'S BANK-ROLL

all settled many years ago by the father of Mr August Belmont. A man sought an interview with him one day in New York, and with a very short delay was shown in to the eminent financier. After a preliminary explanation, the visitor drew out from his pocket an elaborate mass of figures, beautifully set out, whereby he showed most conclusively that over the previous season's races, acting on his system, there would have been an enormous profit. "And Mr Belmont," he proceeded, "we are only two months launched on the present season, and the margin of profits is even more stupendous, for you will see that, up to last Saturday, we have netted a larger sum in proportion." Perry Belmont appeared to be greatly interested, taking a pencil and ticking off various items with approval. "Just wait a moment," he said, "there is one little difficulty, which, however, may be got over, but I'm afraid it can't. I'll inquire." He pressed a bell and he asked for his secretary. "Tell me," he said to his confidential man, "how much money we have at our disposal at twelve o'clock to-day after providing for all possible contingencies." After two minutes' delay, the secretary re-entered and handed him a slip of paper. The great banker read from the scrap of paper: "Three million four hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Ah! I was afraid so," he said, "there's the rub: we haven't enough money for your system, perfect as it appears on paper!"

From the time of joining the *Express* I was always on the look-out for some feature which should be attractive in an odd way. Tens of thousands were put on to the circulation by the idea of the sale of cricket bats, by which I secured nearly four hundred pounds for the Cricketers' Fund. Being at the Oval for the finish of that remarkable match between

NEWSPAPER WINDOW-DRESSING

England and Australia in the autumn of 1902, I endeavoured to get from Hirst and Rhodes the bats which they used in making that final stand which won England the match, but they would not part with them. Having the idea in my head I would not give it up, and, asking many prominent cricketers for a bat, got together nearly two score, which were offered to the highest bidders. The sale was to close on a certain evening, and two or three of the bats could have been sold twice over. Nearly all offers were eclipsed by a Putney publican giving fifty pounds for a bat of W. G. Grace's. Trumper's was bought by a fancier for forty-two pounds, and all the others were distributed. Rhodes and Hirst eventually gave theirs, and they were sold at a big figure. The effect of the whole feature, which ran some weeks, was to increase permanently the circulation. Those who are not in the newspaper business have little idea what it takes to make even a daily paper known to the million. I took a cab one day to ask that eminent Surrey cricketer, Robert Abel, a few questions, and was most disconcerted on hearing from him that he had never heard of the *Express*. However, that was soon repaired. I told Mr Pearson, and he did not seem altogether surprised; he repeated to me the figures of the enormous sums which had been expended in preliminary publicity, and every month after the first issue in keeping the name of the new paper before the public.

A year or two afterwards there was the idea of getting up a sale of race-horses for the "Fresh Air Fund," providing there could be a sufficient number of gift horses; the early stages of it formed a remarkable success. Mr J. B. Joel was one of the first interviewed; he gave me three two-year-olds. Mr Sol Joel

DAM OF AN OAKS WINNER FOR 23 GS.

presented two; Lord Howard de Walden, Lord Carnarvon, Sir Thomas Dewar and many others gave one. The trouble was to get them all together and sell them; that was where a slight error of judgment was made. They should have been delivered straight away for sale at a race-meeting, instead of which they were mustered together at a farm near Esher. That excellent sportsman, Mr Horlick, who is so well known in the hunting field, took them up at his place, and eventually they were brought to Hurst Park one Saturday to be sold. Having been turned out for some weeks they looked terrible beside those in training which had preceded them in the sale ring, and the result was most disappointing, the highest price realised being twenty-three guineas for a two-year-old filly by Trenton, who was bought by Mr William Allison. Her dam was Rosalys; I named her Rosaline before the sale. What a bargain someone missed; for, eventually put to St Frusquin, one of the first of her get was Rosedrop, who won the Oaks in 1910! Rosaline was worth anything afterwards. There was a fine opportunity with the fillies given of starting quite a charity stud farm, for there were many nominations given to various stallions, including Collar, but unfortunately breeders never took the opportunity offered them.

To show the different methods of various owners, the Messrs Joel had all their horses, in training and otherwise, most beautifully entered in special books kept for the purpose. There were various remarks against each of them, and it did not take very long to choose the particular animals which were to be bestowed on the Fresh Air Fund. Mr Leopold de Rothschild got over the difficulty of searching for a horse by giving twenty-five pounds—what a prince

NEWSPAPER WINDOW-DRESSING

in anything to do with charity! My interview with Sir Thomas Dewar at Dewar's Wharf was interesting. "I haven't got a horse, Luckman; you go and buy one somewhere, and put it in the sale afterwards from me." I asked how much I should pay. "Oh, you ought to get something for twenty or twenty-five pounds," and he was going to write a cheque, when he suddenly remembered that he had an unbroken three-year-old down at his brother's place in Norfolk *which he had forgotten all about!* "Fancy you or I forgetting about a horse, especially a thoroughbred of good pedigree," he said. Eventually the three-year-old arrived, and he was a very natty little fellow, by Prince Hampton, who went under the standard and was bought at the sale and sent to West Africa, I believe; at all events I heard of him winning pony races out there. It was Lord Derby who very kindly gave me the idea of getting the gift of nominations to stallions. He asked me to go to the War Office to see him; he was then a Cabinet Minister. He said he didn't know of any horse he had, but he would give me a nomination to Melanion. This was before he succeeded to the title, then being Lord Stanley.

The sale was interesting enough, as it brought me into touch with many who had known me by sight before. Mr Joseph Davies of Hurst Park very courteously gave permission for the sale to be at Hurst Park, and the late Mr Stevens sold without commission. By the way, I wonder how many know that it was the present King gave the sobriquet of "The Walrus" to Mr Stevens. I am sure Mr Stevens would not be offended at this, for I have heard the King, when Prince of Wales, saying when a horse was going to be sold: "Let us see how much the Walrus will get for this one."

CHAPTER XXXV

MINORU'S YEAR

Richard Marsh—The Trainer at Home—The Late Duke of Hamilton—Minoru's First Race as a Three-year-old—Craze for Bayardo—Tod Sloan on Sir Martin—The Grave Doubt about the Verdict—George Stern speaks of Bayardo—Joe Marsh as Starter and Horse Hypnotist—Joe and Diamond Jubilee

It has been most pleasurable to mark the increased interest which his Majesty is showing in turf matters. There was a good deal of unrest felt after King Edward's death as to what attitude King George would take up concerning racing. I do not think that Richard Marsh had any fears on the question, and Lord Marcus Beresford soon assured him that things would be quite all right, and, so far as I gather, Lord Marcus himself was anxious that some pronouncement should be made as soon as practicable after a certain period of mourning. Naturally, it meant a great deal to that good fellow and natural gentleman, Richard Marsh, who has maintained, and still keeps up, that very extensive establishment at Egerton House.

Ten years back Marsh had four owners: his Majesty, Mr Larnach, Lord Wolverton and Mr Arthur James. The expenses presumably were divided in certain proportions, but eventually, and as befitted the dignity of a royal owner, Mr Marsh became private trainer to the King. Egerton House is the home of a country squire, beautifully maintained with comfort, in fact luxury. Richard Marsh, a fine cross-country rider in his time, was made a great friend of by the late Duke of Hamilton, for whom he rode and trained.

MINORU'S YEAR

“Never mind the horses,” the Duke would say to him, “let them run when we come back. Come away to the Arctic in the yacht.” And they would go, and the horses would only be kept in steady work until the return. Some beautiful polar-bear rugs are souvenirs of adventures on these northern trips. It is not in bad taste to express the appreciation for detail in Mr Marsh’s house. The tumblers are of a special model which were much liked by the late Duke; the Apollinaris comes out of a stone-cold cellar, and the “cellar” is of special “marks” exactly as consumed by more than one distinguished personage. King Edward and Queen Alexandria have frequently lunched and taken tea at Egerton House.

Mr Marsh’s second wife is a daughter of Sam Darling. One does not wish to give a dry-as-dust record of all the successes achieved by the King’s trainer; the horseshoes in the stable are testimony to the number and importance of the victories, and the oil paintings in the house of Persimmon, Diamond Jubilee and Florizel II. mark various stages of successes. Richard Marsh himself cannot be too highly esteemed. I have met him at his home, on a race-course and off it, and if ever a man deserved the position he is in, and was worthy of being decorated with the Victorian Order by King Edward, Richard Marsh was. This was bestowed one afternoon when the King drove out to Egerton House. He called him aside and pinned the order on his breast. I can well imagine the trainer’s feelings that afternoon at being marked out for such distinction. It was a recognition such as neither money nor words could ever have expressed.

Looking out across the beautiful grounds of Egerton House, the immense upkeep of the place can be

MINORU'S FIRST RACE

realised, and there must be a terrible sense of responsibility. He wants another year like Minoru's.

I wish to be modest, but the victory of that horse in the Two Thousand and Derby was another big score for the paper I was attached to. I had mentioned Minoru back in the winter and was strongly of opinion that he was a much better horse than his two-year-old running had shown. His first outing as a three-year-old was to be in the Greenham Stakes at Newbury, a race for which Valens was expected to be a warm favourite; nevertheless, I napped Minoru; he won comfortably. Of course there was nothing else to do but to follow up Minoru in the rest of his engagements. Bayardo had been a wonderful two-year-old, but had not, I hear, trained on, and gone the way his many admirers had hoped for.

I was down at Newmarket at the Craven Meeting and then followed the First Spring Meeting. On the Tuesday I had met several of those who supply newspapers with information, and among them were several very argumentative beings. They were Bayardo-mad, and I have found from many experiences, sometimes costing me dearly, that the only way really to squelch an unusually dogmatic man is to bet him something which shall for the moment appease him. Thus it came about that there were many side wagers, Minoru *v.* Bayardo, one in particular with Schultz Lyndall, and a few bets taken straight out about Richard Marsh's horse. Of course on paper it seemed a gift for Bayardo, but Alec Taylor had experienced various difficulties with him. Minoru won comfortably from Phaleron, with Louviers third and Bayardo fourth. The rest never did anything, and, all things considered, Bayardo must be esteemed a very unlucky horse.

Then came the Newmarket Stakes, which Louviers

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won from that nice mare Electra, who had taken the One Thousand. That most capable rider, Bernard Dillon, had a very strong idea that he would win the One Thousand Guineas, despite the fact of Princesse des Galles being backed like a semi-certainty. Perola was also fancied, and I was able to get nine to one about Electra, who won in great style. Louviers, however, won the big race at the Second Spring Meeting. Then came the discussion about the Derby; of course there was nothing else to do but to nap Minoru again. There was a larger contingent of Americans present at Epsom that year than I have ever seen before or since; they had come to back Sir Martin. He had been out once before in England, winning the Wednesday Welter at Newmarket as he liked. He had such a tremendous reputation in America that it seemed to those who had seen him run, and knew his reputation, that it was money for nothing. American breeders and trainers looked to him to uphold their reputation, and to make a bold bid for the greatest honours on the turf.

Dining one night with a friend of mine at the Savoy, he asked me the best way to get a very large sum of money on Sir Martin. Before giving him the pointer as to the best way to go to work and average his money at a fair price, I told him that I knew the American horse had come over with a big reputation, but was he sure that Sir Martin was as big a horse as he had been acclaimed? "Well, boy," he said, "I have seen him run all his races. There was a four-and-a-half furlong event at Belmont Park last year where he was giving five pounds to Uncle Jim; he could only run second, but it was a sloppy track that day and the winner did it in fifty-four seconds. He followed that up by winning the Great American Stakes at Gravesend,

TOD SLOAN ON SIR MARTIN

carrying what is in your reckoning 8 st. 13 lb. He did that in $\frac{3}{4}$ ths of a second over the minute. Then he carried 129 lb. (9 st. 3lb.) and won a six-furlong race in 1 min. 12 sec. He beat Wedding Bells and a lot of others carrying 122 lb. (8 st. 10 lb.) in the Saratoga Special; and then ran second in the Futurity, but turned the tables on Maskette at Flatbush, doing the seven furlongs in 1 min. 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ sec. In his thirteen races Sir Martin has been second four times, and has won eight times, only being out of the first three on one occasion." That was the dope (form) of Sir Martin.

I met Tod Sloan and he said: "Don't be silly. You think you may know the winner, but Sir Martin is the greatest certainty ever known here. I wish I had my 'ticket' and was going to ride him; I'd show them the sort of horse he is." There is a lot to say of Sloan in another book, and then you will see that it was almost inevitable to believe him, but fortunately, as it happened, everyone wanted to back Sir Martin and the price didn't suit me. He went to the post, therefore, without a penny being invested on him by your Uncle Dudley. I met Sloan a little while before the "off" and he said: "You're going to have a good win of course?" "I hope so," I replied, "but not over Sir Martin. He's too hot for my taste." He jeered at me. I had given Minoru as my nap for the race and William the Fourth for a place. It came out correctly, but I shall always think that the last-named with a bit of luck should have won and—now I am going to say a startling thing—I shall never believe that Louviers lost. I drew my money over Minoru, but without any disrespect to Judge Robinson, an official whom I hold in the greatest esteem, I cannot get out of my mind the idea that it was very difficult to separate Minoru from Louviers and that the

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latter was not headed. I am not one of those who are eternally quibbling at the judge's verdict, especially when it goes against the pocket. Minoru and Louviers raced home together in a race never to be forgotten. Sir Martin had fallen coming down the hill to Tattenham Corner, and William the Fourth had lost ground by having to stop and jump over the sprawling body of the American candidate, and yet he was only half-a-length behind Louviers, the judge's verdict being a short head victory for Minoru. Valens was fourth and Bayardo fifth.

There never were so many hard-luck stories told afterwards. Martin says that Sir Martin was going better than anything when he slipped up. Although I know Mr Raphael by sight so well, and have had the casual word at the ring-side, he is not a personal acquaintance. He took the defeat of Louviers like a strong man; his only idea was to interview his jockey, George Stern. The latter told him what he told me afterwards, that he was certain he was not beaten; in fact, he thought that he had won. I shall never cease thinking that Louviers caught Minoru, and that the King's horse did not have any margin in front of the other.

But what a newspaper story it was, the King of England winning the Derby! I had to stay for the Juvenile Selling Plate, in which there was something good to bet on in William Penn, and then hurried back to do the biggest Derby story one had ever had to write. It was a three-column record, one that I shall ever be pleased with, because the facts were marshalled so concisely and gave me the utmost satisfaction the next day when it all appeared in print, a little less than a year before the King died; it set up a record for a king.

MINORU'S LAST RACE

I am not going through the subsequent careers of the horses which ran that year. In Paris William the Fourth and Valens were sent over to run for the Grand Prix. Dillon, who rode the former, tried the same tactics he had been forced to adopt on Spearmint three years before, but it did not come off, while Valens made no show at all. It was a red-letter year for Richard Marsh with this same Minoru. He won the Sussex Stakes at Goodwood, was unplaced to Bayardo in the St Leger, and then King Edward had the satisfaction of seeing Maher win on him from Electra and two others in the Free Handicap in the autumn. That was Minoru's last race. Bayardo had never shown his form, but he began by winning the Prince of Wales Stakes at Ascot.

I was over in Paris for a few days' racing and met George Stern at the Chatham. He told me he was going over to ride Louviers in the Sandringham Foal Stakes, and asked me what sort of a chance he had. I told him I thought he had a winning ride, there being nothing to beat him. "But," I added, "there is a horse named Bayardo, who will be ridden by Danny that you must look out for." On the following Sunday I met Stern at Chantilly. "Thank you very much," he said. "I looked out for that horse you told me about, and I shall always have to look out for him. There's not a horse in Europe who can get near him; at least, that's my opinion." Stern was right, for with the exception of that extraordinary race for the Goodwood Cup when Magic beat Bayardo, he never met his conqueror during the rest of his racing career. Stern is a great judge, but so could others be about Bayardo, who was an extraordinary animal.

Richard Marsh has been spoken of. I have known two of his brothers: Harry, who died a few years back,

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and Joe Marsh, a great starter, and at present the greatest wonder with a horse's mouth living. Joseph Marsh at one time was a professional rider under National Hunt Rules, and has some very amusing stories to tell of some of his experiences in the days when crowds were apt to be very demonstrative over any little incident which they thought to be "peculiar business." Joe Marsh is to my idea the most capable starter at present in this year of 1914 officiating. He has several English meetings where his services are in demand, and is believed in most thoroughly at Ostend. They give him plenty of scope, for he can either give the walk-up starts to the gate, or make the horses stand still before the tapes just as he wishes. Furthermore, according to the Belgian regulations, in the event of an unsatisfactory start he can bring the lot back and send them off again. Joe Marsh is an official to the tips of his fingers on racing days, but can relax and be a private citizen on other occasions. But he is a wizard at horse dentistry, and trainers in England, France and Belgium know this well. His hands are covered with scars as the result of what he calls a little playful business on the part of his patients. He never goes in for casting a horse, nor preventive measures against what one may try to do with him. The assumption must be that he hypnotises them, for he trusts to his hands to do everything which is necessary—an extraction, lancing or what not. Certainly before horse dentistry was properly understood there must have been a great deal of unnecessary suffering, and what is more, many great horses could not have given their best running. Not only is it with the horse's mouth that Joe Marsh has such winning ways, but his extraordinary influence over a horse is something uncanny. He happened once on New-

JOE'S DIAMOND JUBILEE

market and paid a visit to his brother Dick. You may know what a peculiar horse Diamond Jubilee was and how he could never stand anyone near him; he was the horse who was the means of bringing Herbert Jones to the front. Diamond Jubilee took such a strong aversion to Morny Cannon that it was impossible to put him up again on the great horse, who was a perfect terror. He was savage; not really vicious, but tricky and obstinate. Care and patience improved him greatly. During his two-year-old career he was quite well mannered, but later he developed a terrible temper; he threw Morny Cannon one day and tried to savage him and showed his strong dislike for the jockey. This was one of his phases of expressing himself. I met Joe Marsh once a day or two after he had been down to Newmarket, and he told me what had happened. His brother Dick had wanted to give Diamond Jubilee a ball, but the horse was in such an impossible frame of mind that it was thought impossible to try it with him. "You go and see what you can do," said Dick chaffingly to him. Joe took the ball and went into the box. It was child's play to the witch-doctor; he simply walked up to the terror and he took it. He was out of the box well inside a minute. "I thought so," said Dick: "he turned you out in double quick time. I was beginning to get a bit nervous about you. But where's the ball?" "Down his throat," answered Joe, "what did I go in for?"

CHAPTER XXXVI

STARTING THE *SPORT SET*

From Magazine to Penny Weekly—Those who were associated with it—Frank Otter entertains the Staff—Amateurs who tried—The *Sport Set* Dinner—Toasting an Embryo Capitalist

DURING my early years on the *Express* I had an idea of a racing magazine, and in 1908 started the *Sport Set*, a sixpenny monthly, which could have been still running to-day had I possessed sufficient patience—and money, dear friends—with it, but there never appeared a sufficient reward for trading on one's own, and the idea occurred to me to change it into a penny weekly. Some little time before Mr Sievier started the *Winning Post* I happened to travel up with him from Eastbourne to London, and he told me of the outline of the *Winning Post*, and expressed himself most intelligently as regards his new venture. At the same time there was the invitation that if I liked to make any suggestions they would be welcome. I spent an afternoon with him at the house he had at Eastbourne, and gave him several pointers with regard to the new paper. Two or three years after he told me that I could have gone in the paper on certain sharing terms had I a mind to, but there was no spirit of adventure at that particular moment; in fact, my hands were pretty full with other work. I was always obsessed with the idea, however, that I should have *my* weekly paper, and thus some day be independent of newspaper proprietors by being on my own.

The magazine referred to was the first step. The

STARTING A WEEKLY

suggestion was made that the *Sport Set* was a good title, and a weekly paper would yield more profit than the magazine. Therefore I got up a dummy, and was approached by J. J. Bentley, for many years President of the Football League, and a vice-president of the Football Association. His daughter took my son, "The Scout," for better and for worse. There had been a little paper known as *Football Chat*, and it was suggested that the latter title be acquired and incorporated with the *Sport Set*. It meant a little capital being found and the scheme formulated. I always had the idea that racing was the chief attraction of the paper or should never have consented to begin the new venture in the month of October. But there seemed an idea that football articles and news are as great an attraction to the public, so the *Sport Set* was launched in the late autumn. If I had waited patiently until the following spring I quite believe that the *Sport Set* as a penny weekly would have been running to-day, and as great a success with regard to esteem and profit as several of those published and sold at twopence, which, frankly, it competed against. We took the old *Winning Post* offices in Essex Street; surely that was a bit of luck to begin with, for the *Winning Post* had gone ahead in the same premises.

It was soon seen that football did not sell the paper; it was the racing in it which appealed to racing men and Bohemia, and there were diverse views as to what really was the best thing to put in it. *My* public I was pretty sure of, but there were some bad moments to go through at directors' meetings, for no two seemed to agree on the most important matters; yet everyone seemed opposed to my ideas concerning the paper. Mr H. G. Norris, who is much interested in football, was the chairman of the company. Mr

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Norris is a strong man and served, I believe, two terms of office as Mayor of Fulham. Then there was his friend and fellow-director of the Fulham Club, Mr Hall. Mr J. J. Bentley and Mr Ralph Cleaver, the artist, were other directors. Mr S. Hill Wood, race-horse owner, cricketer, and a man who has won a Waterloo Cup, took a small financial interest, and shares were taken up by others.

It was pretty hard work running that show and doing my regular duties at the *Express*, *Evening Standard*, etc., but there was not a daily article at that time in the latter paper. It was an extraordinary office and staff. Having a lot of odd furniture myself, my own room, which had formerly been Sievier's, was sumptuous, and there were some most interesting afternoons occasionally. The outer office was the publishers' department, but at the back of the house at Essex Street there was a perfect warren. I had four rooms, one being a retiring sanctum, another the secretary's office, and on the ground floor there was the contributors' room, with some comfortable arm-chairs and a big table at which the staff could do their work, if any.

Frank Otter was the first I treated with, and he became the Paris correspondent. Such a find! He wrote the brightest stuff possible, and I shall always regret that the *Sport Set* did not live, as the world has lost a lot of brilliant work in consequence. Master Frank Otter, I can say, wanted a little sub-editing at times, as some of his copy verged on the erotic; nevertheless, I would always pick the envelope containing his copy out before any other letter, as I knew that it meant amusement and brilliance. Frank was not a quick worker, for he told us when he made periodical visits to the office that he had to "collect his ideas."

FRANK OTTER ENTERTAINS

Still, the result was there when he had finished it. He must have slogged in better in Paris than he did in London, for there were greater distractions when he would come in a taxi to Essex Street after a good lunch, ostensibly to do his work. But he met the boys there, and he was such a hospitable friend that they had to be entertained. With his broad-braided lounge coat, silk hat, shepherd's-plaid trousers and crook stick he would ask to be excused for a minute or two. I would see him saunter across the road and think he had gone to buy cigarettes or send a telegram. He would return in very quick time, but nevertheless leisurely, with a newspaper parcel under each arm—two quarts of wine. Then there was the finding of glasses and the summoning of some of the members of the staff from the back room. Nicko Wood—N. J. Wood—who won the Great Metropolitan with Whinbloom; Walter Kerr—"Doddles"—Tolly Wingfield and others used to come to the office. Lord Torrington also used to drop in; he is another to whom a regret must be expressed that the *Sport Set* did not turn out a success. I had taken on Alan Stern, who is quite making his way in these days as a caricaturist. Then there was John Lane and others. Two quarts did not always go the round, still, there was always whisky in the cupboard.

Mr Norris resigned the chairmanship after a very few weeks. His ideas were not mine or mine his; it makes no matter. Then succeeded the struggle through a winter without a single racing advertisement. Before the end of the season—in fact, about three or four weeks after the paper had been going—I went into the bar at the Empire and met C. Francis Chapman, who was then running the Chatham Hotel in Lower Regent Street. He gave me a half-page advertise-

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ment, and I was in luck that evening, for then and the next day at luncheon I got eighty pounds for the next week's issue, which showed an advertising revenue of nearly one hundred and fifty pounds. Not so bad, but directly racing was over the advertisements dried up. Then the football season was the only thing to depend on, and it wasn't worth a carrot, despite what boosters of the game considered it would be. Oh, that long dreary winter! The boys kept cheery, and on the eve of publishing day some of them would stay on till ten or eleven o'clock reading proofs, and really buckle to and use their best endeavour. "Nicko" was one of the best; he was really trying hard and would be gratified in the extreme when he got his little weekly cheque. He was really very humorous in his articles, written in an inconsequent way, but with great pride. He would never leave the article for me, but like many other beginners bring it in and watch my face while it was being read over, and squirm when it was blue pencilled. But there was the determination on occasions to do his best. He would go out and get an advertisement. It was always advisable to let the boys know that there could be a "touch" on account that week so long as the signed order for an "ad." was delivered.

Poor Jim Hill (Major Hill), son of Lord Arthur Hill, who died in 1913, would come to the office with his pal Nicko, and I can tell you there was quite a gathering of well-known men about town. Of course it was a scream having such a staff, but they loved the place and I must say that no one was more sorry than myself when the publication had to cease. But it wasn't funny to take a nice packet of notes and gold from Shoe Lane, which I drew every week from the *Express* and the *Evening Standard*, to keep the show

THE *SPORT SET* DINNER

going in Essex Street, and that is what occurred for more weeks than I care to remember. In the late winter, or rather the early spring of 1910, I was introduced at this very office to Cecil Drew who can be mentioned in a subsequent chapter in connection with the Counties Club at Newmarket with which I was so much identified.

We had a *Sport Set* dinner when the paper was two or three months old, and indeed it was a notable gathering in a big private room at the Waldorf Hotel. A number were invited, including one or two City magnates; where on earth they are now, God only knows! The whole of the staff were present. Willie Griggs played the piano to us, and brother Walter sang. Our tame inventor, a most wonderful Frenchman, who was one of the many on the staff, M. Bouracier, played and sang us French songs. Then there was the verse writer, Sullivan, Bernard Dillon, George Graves, Guy Campbell and many others. The dinner had been ordered with much care, in fact more of a supper than dinner, because we did not wish to exact the wearing of evening clothes, as it did not fit the spirit of ultra-Bohemia which the gathering was in spirit. It was a great evening. I remember putting up one man to propose the health of an eminent gentleman from whom we had financial hopes with regard to the *Sport Set*. I had put the latter on my right. I wish to goodness I had taken on the job myself, for instead of saying everything which I anticipated he would, and making a most laudatory speech about the moneyed one, he prefaced his remarks with the fact that he had only met the gentleman in question for the first time that evening, but he had "no doubt whatever that he was a splendid fellow," otherwise he would not have been invited on

STARTING THE *SPORT SET*

that wonderful occasion. Now the man who made that speech can be quite brilliant, and on nine occasions out of ten the most tactful chap one could meet on a voyage round the world, but if you will enter into the subtle points he said wrong you will understand that I had in my mind that it might be necessary for another channel of finance for that wonderful paper, the *Sport Set*. Whatever was uttered, in a way which was a triumph in saying the wrong thing, the diction was excellent, and the voice modulated to the right tone, so that it went right well; and, wonderful to relate, the man who was made the guest of the evening took it in the way I had intended he should, and not in the manner the proposer of the toast conveyed it.

Guy Campbell, clear brain as he always possesses, was the only one at the table who was really amused. He wrote on the back of a menu card: "Sorry, old chap, what a bloomer! It won't come off." Extraordinary personality, Guy Campbell, he would make an excellent ruler for a turbulent new principality. He has never been taken at his full worth; but perhaps before the tenth edition of this book has been published he will have achieved the fame he deserves. William Griggs stayed at the piano as long as no one else wanted to get there, but it was an evening of surprises.

In the declining days of the paper there were certain pathetic moments. At the end of the week, when the boys had been told that their salaries were at sixty-six to one (offered), there would be little excuses made for coming into that gorgeous front room of mine and a certain shuffling before they left it. A little pretext would be made in asking what was uppermost in their minds. "Sorry things are not going too well, but I didn't want to come to the office to-morrow (Saturday). I was wondering whether my

DECLINING DAYS

bit could either be paid to me to-night or sent on to me to-morrow." Invariably they were obliged, and, as I say, these various sums were paid out of my hard earnings down in Shoe Lane. I do not take any special credit for doing this, but the idea of the *Sport Set* was initiated by me and it is through the publication of this book that I explain many other difficulties besides this particular one.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE FETISH OF NEWMARKET

Perpetual Dullness—Hackneyed Praise—Fiction about King Edward—
A Friend buys a Property—Headquarters' Cliques—Mr Leopold
de Rothschild and St Amant's Derby—The Historic Thunder-
storm—A Friendly Rub Down—Santo Strato

DURING eight weeks in the year racing journalists have to visit Newmarket. There are moments when we can kid ourselves into enthusiasm about what is euphemistically known as "headquarters," but on occasions Newmarket can be cursed as the dullest place on God's earth. I have had a pretty considerable experience of this same Newmarket, and my opinion is quite well worth having. I have passed some of the most delightful times possible in the place, and some of the dreariest which a man ever went through. I am not one of those who begin a racing article with a description of the weather or the "Clerk of the Weather," "King Sol," "Jupiter Pluvius"; in fact, I have laid it down to my staff always that these expressions were to be barred, as well as such little phrases as "fought like Trojans," "Dame Fortune," and other hackneyed stupidities, when writing on other topics.

It is inevitable to refer to the "wonderful air" of Newmarket. The late King Edward has been quoted by many, including myself, as having given real superlative praise to the gorgeous air of Newmarket: and that is why—perhaps and perhaps not—he went there so frequently. As a matter of fact King Edward never said anything of the sort, so far as I can gather

THE FASCINATION OF NEWMARKET

from those who were in close touch with him. He went to Newmarket because he was fond of racing, because it gave him a few days of freedom, and, for another reason, he had intimate friends with whom he came in closer touch during those periods of relaxation. As a matter of fact, to my certain knowledge, the King as prince and monarch was occasionally very bored with the place ; perhaps because occasionally he had to be civil to the many dull people who affect Newmarket. To appreciate the place thoroughly and declaim this is occasionally a pose ; it is not the result of optimism through winning, an affectation of still liking a place although luckless, but Newmarket is apt to become a sort of fetish. I remember going in to tea one afternoon in a London drawing-room and meeting a certain Irish owner who said he had never been to Newmarket, and was particularly desirous of doing so. Before we left that house before dinner I had telephoned for rooms for him at the Victoria Hotel, as it was then : I had stayed there for some time, at all events since its opening. The entrée to the members' enclosure was arranged before racing began. In the early morning all the discomfort of standing on wet grass while the rain beat down on uplifted umbrellas was gone through, in the necessity of being thorough and seeing the gallops in the morning. He caught the spirit of Newmarket, and on the third day he surprised me before racing began by the news that he had bought a property in which he was going to live on the Bury Road. Both he and his wife were delighted at the thought of staying there : that is how one can catch the fever for Newmarket. But the anticipation of living at headquarters and the realisation can be totally different.

To say that Newmarket has cliques is not to describe

THE FETISH OF NEWMARKET

it. There are so many sets that the place is rendered impossible socially. There are those immediately surrounding the King, such as Lord Fitzwilliam, Mr Leopold de Rothschild and Sir Ernest Cassel. There are always one dinner during a royal visit at the house of these three. Mr Leopold de Rothschild lives at Palace House—a former residence of royalty, hence the name. Those who are privileged to stay there are very well entertained, for each guest not only has a bedroom with bathroom, but a sitting-room which is his own private quarters. Mr Leopold de Rothschild usually hacks out to the course or to the Bury side in the morning to see the work, but his guests can do as they please. He entertains as befits the environment, and is a prince of good sportsmen. He trusts implicitly his trainer, Watson, but makes all his own engagements for the horses in his stable, taking his own judgment absolutely in this respect. He is a keen reader of character and has few prejudices.

When Mr Rothschild won the Derby with St Amant one of his first cares was to send a wire off to his sons at Harrow telling them of the victory. It was his common-sense of giving Kempton Cannon an absolutely free hand as to how he rode the colt that perhaps won him the coveted honour. Kemmy told me about it afterwards. "Having no orders to obey Mr Rothschild, and Mr Watson having absolutely left it to me, I let him slip to the front the moment I got a chance, fifty or a hundred yards after he left the gate, and, as you know so well, after this he was never headed." Perhaps he was lucky to beat John o' Gaunt, who was ridden by Mr George Thursby, who by the by was also second on Picton to Spearmint in 1906. Mr Thursby never realised his ambition of winning a classic race, but it is doubtful whether any living professional

ST AMANT'S DERBY

would have done any better; Mr Thursby has always been in a class by himself among amateur riders. St Amant had previously won the Two Thousand Guineas from John o' Gaunt and Henry the First. Cannon also told me on the first day at Doncaster that he thought he should take the triple crown, in fact, he was very confident of winning the St Leger. I said to him: "Cannon, you will never beat Pretty Polly in a creation of cats. Don't get it into your head that you will." I couldn't afford to back the mare, as she was at five to two on, but got seven to one about Henry the First, one, two, three in a field of six, and later got fifty to ten, one, two. He ran second, starting at fifty to one for a win. St Amant was not in the first three, he wouldn't have it. Certainly he won the Jockey Club Stakes the following year, but this was through his having a course of schooling over hurdles. This was the idea of young Tom Cannon, and it was the greatest feather in his cap. I remember getting a nice price about him for the race, something about ten to one if I remember correctly, and it made that evening in Newmarket tolerable. He was a peculiar horse, and better than the majority may have considered him. Although the year was not a remarkable one bar Pretty Polly, it was much above the average.

When St Amant won the Derby Mr Rothschild gave away a certain number of souvenir match-boxes to commemorate the victory of his horse, and I am the fortunate possessor of one of them; he was very gratified at the victory. That was the year when the thunderstorm raged when the horses were at the post. Mr Edmond Blanc had sent over Gouvernant to run, and I took the journey to Boulogne to see him arrive and journeyed across the Channel with him. Everything was in his favour. I saw him get out of his box

THE FETISH OF NEWMARKET

from Paris and he was stabled near the Hotel du Louvre in Boulogne, being in charge of the late coachman to the British Embassy in Paris, Mr Adams. He had a good journey the next day to London, and was confidently expected to win. The thunderstorm, however, was generally accepted as causing his undoing. How the rain came down during that race, and afterwards! Mr Leopold de Rothschild had to go down to lead his horse in, but it was pouring like fury. He turned up the collar of his frock-coat—he was standing only a yard from me—and went down the steps across the subscribers' lawn and out of the gate of the weighing enclosure to lead St Amant in. When he returned his clothes were in a terrible state, and friendly handkerchiefs had to be requisitioned to give him a sort of rub down before he went to obey the King's summons. His hat was "done in," but even that had to be given a dab or two to make it less disreputable. However, his damp state did not mar the warmth of King Edward's congratulations that he had at last won the greatest race in the world. Mr Rothschild was tickled to death. He showed a few of us a little mascot he had received that morning from an unknown donor. It was a little Maori god made out of New Zealand greenstone, and it proved a wonderful talisman.

It is no part of these reminiscences to go through an owner's record, but another horse might be mentioned of whom Mr Rothschild had the highest hopes. That was Santo Strato, who ran third to Your Majesty and White Eagle in the St Leger of 1908. This was a real good horse, but before the Leger he had ricked his back, but this was not generally known. He was up against two very live propositions and in the circumstances it was good form to finish where he did. I had

SANTO STRATO

a strong idea that he would prove one of the best four-year-olds in 1909, and had a good win over him when he won the Chester Cup. He was also coupled in a double with Ebor for the Jubilee. It came off at the odds of about a hundred and forty to one, with a firm in Switzerland, and less odds were accepted when travelling in the train with Harry Otter up to Chester. Joe Marks was in the dining car, but, unfortunately, the double I backed with him was Yentoi and Ebor and Santo Strato and Dean Swift, who ran second. The lump of cheese I had through the suggestion of Mr Wood, Mr Rothschild's racing manager, tasted pretty well. Santo Strato had previously run into a place for the Queen's Prize on Bank Holiday. When he came out to run for the Coronation Cup Mr J. B. Joel told me that I had a bee in my bonnet in thinking that the horse had any chance; he was right that day, but the horse was not himself.

Sir Ernest Cassel has a most beautiful establishment at Moulton Paddocks, in fact the grounds are a delight, and the mansion one of the most complete of country houses. King Edward used to go and have an afternoon bath there occasionally, something of the Turkish or Russian order, for there is a complete installation there. On the Monday preceding a racing week the band will arrive from town for the entertainment of Sir Ernest's guests. For a man whose name is so constantly before the racing world, and whose close association with royalty is so well known, Sir Ernest Cassel is a man little known to the ordinary race-goer, in fact, very few of those we meet racing could point him out, and yet he was the trusted financial adviser of King Edward and the last outside his own family who saw him on the night he died.

There was an extraordinary bond of friendship

THE FETISH OF NEWMARKET

between the late King and Mr Rothschild and also between King Edward and the owner of Moulton Paddocks. The wills of kings are private documents not given to the nation, but to my certain knowledge there were certain bequests and requests which Sir Ernest alone had to carry out.

We used to see the King very frequently at the spring and autumn meetings. He would always wear his favourite soft felt hat, known in recent years as a Homburg hat. In the two July meetings he would wear a hat of the same shape in panama, and garb himself in light flannels, and would sit revelling in the sunshine which is the usual luck of July meetings. He did not walk about so much on the summer course as he did in the spring and autumn. One looked upon him in the paddock as an ordinary owner, yet an extraordinary being. Such is the unwritten law of Newmarket that if one of those who was unknown to him almost rubbed shoulders, it was not fitting to recognise him ; in fact, it was his delight not to be troubled by any hat-lifting from strangers. And although such a stickler for punctilio he never demanded any super-recognition from his friends. At Epsom it was different, but even there it was remarkable how those known to him would be summoned to speak to him ; these would in effect be like members who catch the Speaker's eye. Of course there is an enormous amount of tradition about Newmarket, the township situated in two counties. One side of the High Street is in Cambridgeshire and the other in Sussex. I think it is greatly owing to the importance of the various stables installed there, and the wonderful way in which the gallops are maintained, that Newmarket keeps up that astonishing reputation. On one occasion I have heard a young trainer rail against the gallops at headquarters.

IS NEWMARKET DULL ?

One morning the veteran Martin Gurry turned on a man he thought was saying too much and said : " You don't know what you're talking about. Let me tell you that Newmarket is better now than ever it has been. Every sort of going is available for horses who have need of different kinds of galloping. Those who can complain of the present state of affairs do not know that they are born." From my own experience there is a good deal of discrimination displayed by Mr Marriott, the official responsible.

There can be a tremendous amount of enthusiasm worked up by seeing the gallops and trials on the Limekilns, but to go into raptures about the life at Newmarket as a town is difficult ; there are so few distractions. When a man has the privilege to stay in one or two private houses it is different. There would be that complete repose after a spring or autumn meeting was over, tea in the open hall with a bright log fire burning, and the tacit understanding that no horse talk was to take place until after dinner : it gave relief. For years I used to finish my work, begun on the racecourse, after tea and go to the post office. There I would get the latest scratchings and entries for any over-night races and wire off the column or column and a quarter with the tips to London ; then it was finished. That is all very well, but when it is a question of sitting about in a hotel or having a walk round the town conversing with good fellows and bores, I can tell you that the gaiety of nations is not added to, and it becomes a question whether we are really engaged in the pursuit of pleasure, the carrying out of ambition or only doing the proper duty as a racing correspondent. Those who travel there and back every day from town and sleep in their own beds have the bulge over their fellows.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

TRUE FACTS ABOUT THE COUNTIES CLUB

Cost of Victoria Hotel—Cecil Drew's Purchase—His Scheme for a Club—My Co-operation invited—Putting the House in Order—Death of King Edward—Lord Lonsdale's Attitude—Should Jockeys be admitted—The Terrible Solitude—That Melancholy Fountain—Bills to be paid—Drew's Tragic End—Lynham's Bargain

ONE day in Essex Street I had a caller who asked me whether I would be willing to interest myself, on certain terms, in the Victoria Hotel, about which there was a suggestion of turning into a club. The "certain terms" were stated, for I never believe in tackling a business proposition unless there is a certain amount of ready money in evidence. I should like to explain fully to those who became members, and to many who have discussed the question of the club and the money which was spent on altering the building, so that they should have the exact story.

It appears that a year or two before the matter was brought to me that Cecil Drew, a well-known member of the Stock Exchange, now dead, who was largely interested in mining stock, had been down to Newmarket for a coursing meeting, and having won a little bit was on good terms with himself that evening when the proposition was put to him whether he wouldn't like to buy the Victoria Hotel. I believe the price mentioned was twenty thousand pounds. The place had originally cost—land and building—eighty-five thousand pounds, and a certain amount more, about twenty thousand pounds, was spent with Maple's, so that altogether this was a very expensive white

CECIL DREW'S PURCHASE

elephant. It was built on the site of an old inn called the Greyhound, where William Jarvis, the trainer, was born. However, I will not go into the history of this, but tell the tale so far as it concerns me.

Drew bought the place, paying a deposit next day. He soon began to regret his bargain and, I believe, tried to sell it, but I was unacquainted with him at that period. From the time I first heard of the scheme until an appointment was made for Drew to come to my office several weeks elapsed. I found him a cheery good fellow, and he told me that he wanted someone to push the scheme along, draft all the rules and notices, and generally take charge of the whole thing. I told him that I would do it, but that "ready" on the nail and certain terms with regard to members would be part of the contract. He assented, and drew me a cheque, and ahead we went. Afterwards I met Mr Miller, a solicitor, who had bought the place and sold it to Drew. A company was registered, a secretary appointed, and the next thing was how to proceed. I went down to Newmarket every week-end, and the first time spent two whole days going over the entire building. It had been my hotel for a good many years during race weeks, and the drawbacks to it I was well acquainted with. To begin with there was the throbbing of an electric light engine, which by the way was always going wrong. There were plenty of rooms: a theatre—used as a ball-room sometimes—a winter garden, a splendid smoking-room, two or three private sitting-rooms, and a fine dining-room with balcony. There was only one thing to do: have the house cleaned from top to bottom, painted and repapered; and another essential was to get the electric light supply from the town. At one or two meetings of directors all my proposals were agreed to. An application was

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made to the Licensing Bench to keep the bar licence, as distinct altogether from the club, as there was a nice little bit of profit out of this bar, and, as I pointed out, if the club did not succeed then it might have to be sold and remade into an hotel. However, that came off all right.

The repairs were begun, and a certain amount of new furniture purchased to furbish up some of the best rooms, and especially to make the winter garden attractive. It all went on steadily. At the Craven Meeting it had not been converted into the club, but then came the change. Everything was progressing, and the place beginning to look beautiful, when the death of King Edward came; it was then good-bye to the Second Spring Meeting and a terrible set-back.

I must explain that, over a year before I heard anything about the place, Lord Charles Ker had been round to many well-known men, and had got their sanction to go on a sort of honorary committee, and these names were handed to me with pride, as signifying that those were the people I had to put at the top of the bill to show the public what sort of club we were going to have. But there was soon to be disillusionment about these names. Lord Lonsdale came to me on the course and said that he must ask for his name to be removed. He did not deny, of course, that he had told Lord Charles that he would "do all he could," but that had been such a long time before. At all events, he had thought better of it, and did not wish to associate himself with the club at all. At the same time he said he very much doubted whether there was any room for such a place. The jockeys and trainers and others had the Subscription Rooms, and there was accommodation in the Jockey Club, etc., for others. I pointed out to Lord Lonsdale that we had enough

STARTING A CLUB

trouble already with the death of the King, and that if he and others insisted on their names coming off it would do us serious injury. What his private reasons were need not be gone into. However, he gave his sanction to let his name remain for another month.

There were some very elegant enamelled club badges—life members and ordinary. Then came the difficulty as to what social lines the club was to be run on. Several of the jockeys had put the question to me, as it was natural they should want to know how they stood with regard to the Turkish baths, a necessity for them. I gave my views that, with regard to men high in the social scale, they all were “*waiting*” to see what each other did; one or two told me frankly that they would look on for a year or two, and see what was going to be done with the place. From the very start I had my own idea that the only way to attract membership was to make it thoroughly cosmopolitan. For instance, there were several well-known layers of odds, such as Ted Hopkins, who always had a suite of rooms reserved for him, so it was agreed that all reputable persons should be eligible; and then the ten guineas began to roll in and there were several foreign members at five guineas—men who came over from France occasionally to Newmarket. The best part of the jockeys joined, and I must say that they were the most grateful for what was supplied to them.

I engaged a ladies' orchestra of three, but, by heavens! how I wish I hadn't, for at odd times between meetings when no member save myself, and perhaps one other, was in the club the place became as dead as a morgue. Still that piano, violin and 'cello would drone away at waltzes and selections, while I sat in a small office on the balcony overlooking the winter gardens, hearing the drip, drip, drip of the melancholy fountain, heard

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the last twitter of the wheezy consumptive in the aviary due to die that night, and saw a thrifty club steward come out and turn off the lights in the winter garden. There was one waiter, an excellent chap, whom I had kept on; he very much resembled, in fact was the dead spit of Alfred Lester. So, dear friends, can you picture some of the moments in that damn club? A little life was put into it on one or two occasions by having a dance, but this was misunderstood by Newmarket, who didn't want any innovation, and who were too mean to help the show along. I had the niggers down—that trio so well known in the West End of London—for the July meetings; a few would come and hear them.

In the meantime, not having a garden, it was decided to take Willoughby House, a beautiful place with a lovely old garden. Tennis and badminton were installed, and became real popular. I will say for certain members of the Ring that they applauded to the echo everything done to amuse them. The big drawing-room, furnished I think very elegantly, was used a fair amount, especially on wet days. But then came periods when a lonely caretaker in livery would stand at the open door trying to welcome in members who never came. "What time will I shut the club to-night, sir?" he would ask. "Any time you darned please," I would reply, and go over to the club proper to hear the cursed drip drip of that everlasting leaking fountain.

In the late summer I had to think of what was going to be done in view of the autumn. Drew was a sick man, but I had to tell him that the bills were coming in. Another hundred was wanted for the electric light company, in addition to what had been paid them. Then the butcher wanted fifty pounds,

BILLS TO BE PAID

and various other suppliers cheques, especially the builder who had done all the decorations; everyone seemed to be wanting a bit. I had arranged an overdraft a little while before of five hundred pounds at a local bank by Drew's wish.

I went to his club in the City and begged him for a few hundred pounds to keep the show going. He was obdurate, telling me that he couldn't spare it, and why didn't I try and sell it. I *did* try, and very hard. There was an idea in the back of my mind that a Stores would go well at Newmarket, and I spoke to Mr W. B. Purefroy about the scheme. The idea was that it might interest Mr Hipplesley Cox, who was and had been in the manager-directorship of Romano's and the Inns of Court Hotel; but nothing came of that, although I had heard that Mr Cox had been possessed all his life of the ambition to control big stores. There is still a chance at Newmarket for some firm to follow up this idea. Boots' have a place there, also Salmon & Gluckstein, but there is a lot of money in the district to be disbursed. Still, Newmarket shops supply pretty well all which is required, and the food especially is excellent.

I tried to get a certain number of debentures placed, and all this was told to Drew, who a month or so before he died sent me a very charming letter thanking me for all that I had done. I am quite sure that, had another thousand pounds been forthcoming, we could have gone on for the October meetings, and those down for the December sales would have kept the game alive. But it was hopeless without any money, and I wrote and resigned my manager-directorship, while holding a certain number of ordinary shares. The matter was left in other hands, and I was so full up with the whole show that I took a continental trip, not feeling too fit

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after all the worry. Then came the time when the club was closed down, and the melancholy thing was that the place was shut up just as everyone wanted it. When abroad, I heard of the death of poor Cecil Drew, who died very tragically. It was a terrible shock, for I had been on very intimate terms with him. We only fell out once, and after that little difference was adjusted we were just as good friends as before. Drew loved an open-air life, but would sit up late with the best of them, yet nevertheless was up very early and out on the Heath whenever he visited Newmarket. He had a nice house in the country and loved everything in the way of nature. A genial companion, he made very few enemies, but was simply tired of pouring money away on his Newmarket investments long before I had anything to do with the show. I had furnished a special suite for him at Willoughby House, which, however, he had never taken possession of. There seemed a sort of fatality about that place, but the expense concerning it was not very great. I am afraid that in connection with the Counties Club there were not very many incidents connected with turf history.

When not at Newmarket I live at the Waldorf Hotel, and Cecil Drew, a very early bird, would come up to my room and have a chat about things in general. Mr first steward—with his wife—was engaged from the staff of his hotel, and I had as much sympathy on occasions for him as for myself in those terrible moments when we had to wander round the big building with an absolute lack of patronage. The day after the King died I went down to Newmarket; it was the Saturday when the Jubilee had been postponed. The terrible tragedy of King Edward's death seemed to be more marked at Newmarket than anywhere, and

LYNHAM'S BARGAIN

it will be remembered that all the racing was abandoned for a period.

To those who have heard the topic of the Counties Club mentioned, I would repeat that the club was not my idea : I was brought into the scheme as no one else seemed capable of carrying it out in any way. The club certainly became a success of esteem, but there were so many factors against it : the death of the King, lack of capital and want of good-fellowship on the part of many local people to support what was really resented. Poor Drew always regretted his bargain, and the bad spec. was always on his mind. He left over fifty thousand pounds, so it wasn't a question of not being able to find any more capital—he wouldn't. Barrington Lynham is now making a big living out of it : he paid under four thousand pounds for a place originally costing six figures of pounds !

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE RACING PRESS

The Late Charles Greenwood—Other "Hotspurs"—Martin and Jack Cobbett—Son of "The Druid"—The "Special Commissioner"—Starting Prices

I HAVE mentioned in a previous chapter that I was always on the look-out for what my contemporaries were doing in the way of new features for their sporting pages. That, however, did not apply to individuals—men who wrote racing I have met with. They have been more of individual or personal studies than the work they did. It was inevitable, however, to become familiar with their methods and style. It may be said there have been during the past decade or two some most capable men, those who could dissect a handicap, appreciate the finer points of racing, and collect news items too. It is not an appreciation of these capabilities, however, which should be set down, as it would be inevitable to mention some in this respect to the exclusion of others. Thus an invidious distinction would be made—as against old and valued acquaintances. It is better that any reference should be of quite a personal nature.

In dealing, say, with the last fifteen years, of course the late Charles Greenwood must be included. I was acquainted with him, but never on terms of intimacy. He was a power in connection with racing journalism, and enjoyed the friendship of the majority of trainers, and many owners. "Hotspur" then was the leading racing authority of the day, and was treated as such.

THE LATE CHARLES GREENWOOD

He had the distinction of leaving a fortune, and that alone singled him out for posthumous recognition by many others less fortunate in either the capacity to make money or back winners. Greenwood, however, had attributes which made him respected: a thorough knowledge of the game of racing, the capacity to judge a good horse when he saw one, and to winnow the information given him, sifting out the absurd optimism of one and picking out that one little grain of another's wisdom with the full idea that it would germinate into a profit-yielding plant. On occasions he was criticised for being too cryptic about a horse's chance when he had a strong idea; but that was merely his method—not committing himself to a tip too early in the day. Besides which, does it not stand to reason that a turf correspondent may have an owner's or trainer's confidence some time in advance on the tacit understanding that it shall not be broken until the eve of a race? One horse I have in my mind was St Bris, when he won the Cesarewitch. It was said that Mr Greenwood benefited largely over his success, although not tipping him until almost the eve of the race. At all events he didn't tip another. Yet St Bris was "Hotspur's" selection in the *Telegraph*, and he won at ten to one; that was in 1896.

The name of Greenwood has been immortalised by the inclusion of a race at the Kempton August Meeting called the Greenwood Welter Handicap. Both Kempton Park and Hurst Park owed a great deal to the dead journalist for the help he gave them in his articles. They wanted pushing along, and, recognising the boon the "Parks" would be to Metropolitan sportsmen, the opportunity was taken to say this. On the Press stand his great cleverness was in "reading" a race. He could follow every phase of it, and speak it out for

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those whose business it is to take it down in notes to do so ; hence the many excellent descriptions—as to correctness in detail—during many years of his active life. He had his predecessors and successors in this respect, but there was a positiveness about his declaration which was indisputable.

When Mr Greenwood died, Fred Ball, who had worked for the Press Association for many years, was given the job, I believe on a seven years' contract. Mr Ball was very thorough in what he did, but took to heart any literals in wiring and any little discrepancies in sub-editing. He will forgive an old friend if I say he took rather too seriously the fact that he had given a second instead of a winner on occasions. It was of course a big task to essay following a man like Charles Greenwood, but Fred Ball was whole-hearted and sincere in his work. He was, during his term of office, a kind friend to many of the "throw-outs" of the turf, and a good host when at his villa at Molesey. This is intended to be read, so my publisher tells me, fifty years hence, so the chronicles of a certain period should be recorded as a linking up of previous histories with those yet to be written.

I can remember about 1906 or 1907 publishing in the *Express* the results up to mid-season of the forecasts of all the principal prophets on the daily papers ; there was the precedent of French papers for this, and the public took a great delight in the figures. It was merciless, however, but "The Scout"—myself—stood to be put in as bad a light as others. I believe Fred Ball at the time thought it an unconscionable thing to do, but if I remember rightly he had no reason to be ashamed of his own record with regard to "prognostics." Some of us, however, take things more to heart than others.

MARTIN COBBETT

Mr Ball has been succeeded during the past year or two—at the moment I write in this year of 1914—by Mr Galtrey, who, coming from India, was, when I first made his acquaintance, the assistant-editor of *Land and Water*, when I wrote the racing article as a side stunt, and also wrote short stories of the turf. The paper was run then by Mr A. E. Manning-Foster, who interested himself in later years in the publishing business of Messrs Greening. Mr Galtrey left *Land and Water*, before it was merged into the *County Gentleman*, to become assistant-editor of the *Sportsman*, then after a period as a special writer on the *Telegraph* was given the “Hotspur” position, which it must be said he occupies ably, combining the attributes of the conscientious, hard-working and knowledgeable sporting writer.

I have met most of the writers of the last generation, and it is somewhat embarrassing to know in which rotation to take them, so that they may take a place in history. They are all such interesting landmarks, not exactly monuments, but stepping-stones which are obvious in a flat country. Some of them have raised, by being a little better placed, a surrounding hillock of sand which in a mist may be mistaken for a small mountain of fame, but it may be erasable in that hurricane which shall smooth out records and make turf memories a simple fetish.

Poor Martin Cobbett will be remembered; he was a great walker, a writer, and imbued with the romance of the byways of England. His “Sporting Notions” in the *Referee* were read, and his odd notes were put in a volume “Wayfaring Notions.” Martin had a ready pen, but frequently one would imagine he was a wanderer or gentleman-gipsy rather than an assiduous follower of the turf, with a serious commission to

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do for himself or others. I knew him for a quarter of a century.

Who hasn't known Jack Cobbett, his brother—we never knew exactly which was the elder. "Jack" has retired from the *Sporting Life* at the time I write, but his memory in the press-room will be ever green. His little quips, snatches of song, outbursts of quotations, his hard-luck stories, and especially his railings against the rulings of providence as affecting him will remain—with embellishments—the special souvenirs of the raconteur. At nearly sixty, Jack Cobbett was as upright in figure as a lad of twenty, and could walk his juniors off their feet, in this respect resembling his brother. This was not the only resemblance, as those who read the *Life* up to, say, 1911 knew. The notes on the appearance of the country, the picturesqueness of detail as to nature's new mantles, animal life, the roadside, and everything which would have pleased even a student of "Lorna Doone" found their way into *racing introductions*!

Sydenham Dixon has been one of the best known of sporting writers, although at the time I write he is not in such prominence. The son of that world-renowned authority "The Druid," Sydenham Dixon, was on the stage for some years, at one time being a member of the Kendals' company, then he drifted back to the absorbing occupation of race writing. For many years he was "Vigilant" of the *Sportsman*. He wrote a series of very interesting articles, at my suggestion, in my magazine the *Sport Set* on the turf careers of well-known great horses who were then at the stud. I considered it would be an education to those who had only been racing a few years, and so it proved. Dixon was very pleased himself with the task, although it meant research and interviewing. Perhaps some day

WILLIAM ALLISON

those stories could be elaborated with advantage. A keen lover of cricket, he could play quite a good game when on the verge of sixty, and he may still have a knock for all I know. Billiards, however, has been his great hobby, and he was president of the Billiard Association for many years. Sydenham Dixon plays a very fair game himself. Not often tempted into going mad about a horse, for a long time he was obsessed with the idea that Rock Sand was one of the greatest horses he ever saw, and actually fancied that he would beat Ard Patrick and Sceptre in the Eclipse Stakes of 1903. So many of us have been mistaken, however, in our time.

I suppose one of the best read and most appreciated writers among knowledgeable students of the turf, owners and trainers is Mr William Allison, who has been for so many years the "Special Commissioner" of the *Sportsman*, is the head of the International Horse Agency in Pall Mall, and runs the Cobham Stud. Mr Allison has made horse-breeding a complete study, and it is well appreciated both at home and abroad. It is he who has brought about some of the biggest deals in thoroughbreds, having sold Galtee More and Ard Patrick; he has framed in his office the original cheques for the purchase money. Needless to say he is consulted by owners and breeders all over the world. He has certain beliefs, which may almost amount in the opinion of some to a craze for certain blood. Trenton in particular we are always apt to hear a great deal about when we pick up the *Sportsman* on Wednesday or Saturday and read his notes; then again certain ideas are apt to come in the "Vigilant" article, which for many years Mr Allison wrote in addition. I always think it's a thankless task to take up another man's *nom de plume* for one day in the week only.

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However, those immediately in touch with sporting topics can easily recognise his style. There is always a fund of dry humour about Allison.

After taking his M.A. he had a long struggle with the Cobham Stud, and I believe that, but for his pluck and knowledge, he would not have got back the big sums expended on it. Incidentally for some years he edited the *St Stephen's Review*, now defunct.

Those who are not in touch with the ways of the sporting press may consider it rather wonderful the way that starting prices are compiled. Every member of the ring and backer in Tattersalls knows Jim George, who has for years returned the prices for the *Sporting Life*; in fact, he is one of the best known identities on a racecourse. We know his gold glasses, his leggings in bad weather, and that wonderful white top hat which comes out every year on Gold Cup Day at Ascot. "There it is," one member of the Press will murmur to another, and there's no need to query what: it is Jim George's immortal headgear. But that is an idiosyncrasy of his, for he is a dapper figure, and dresses quite in a modern way, with good clothes. The only assumption is that there must be a history concerning that hat. With regard to his work, he is ever alert in the ring, going up and down the rails to hear the latest "bargains," and has access to the books of the leading layers in the ring to refer to when he so desires, so that correctness with regard to the last prices booked or offered shall be maintained.

Sometimes there is grumbling on the part of those who have only heard certain offers on the outskirts of the ring; they are as a rule very unreliable, and the difference is easily accounted for. One small man may have had an extraordinary run on two or three horses only, and wishes to get a few pounds in over

STARTING PRICES

two or three animals, the names of which he may not have booked a single penny for. Hence the occasional offers of fifty to one or even a hundred pound to a cigar. Now, neither Jim George nor Paul Widdowson, who does the same for the *Sportsman*, can take any notice of those sort of offers. It is their duty to compile the prices from where the solid business is done. While we adhere to the custom of newspapers supplying the prices which regulate the transactions of millions of pounds per annum, the way in which the work is done must be recorded, but if it be thoroughly considered the idea is fanciful. It is called "official" in default of their being anything official. I believe at one time the idea was tried at Hurst Park of putting up the starting price in the frame containing the winning numbers, but that Mr Joseph Davis was told somewhat summarily by the stewards to "desist." Good luck to him for having the courage to assist the public in gaining information considering the amount of S. P. business there is done on a racecourse between layer and backer on the spot and by wire.

CHAPTER XL

MORE RACING WRITERS

“Robin Goodfellow’s” Quotations—“The Scout’s” Double Duties—The *Sportsman* Staff—Our Gentleman Rider—Flub-dub News Stories—The Tease on *Truth*—The Veteran John Corlett

I SUPPOSE everybody knows “Robin Goodfellow,” otherwise Mr Mellish, of the *Daily Mail*. A more thorough worker does not exist. Of course he has the inestimable advantage of an enormous circulation behind him which must be appealing. I know it always was to me when doing the *Express* article, we get so closely in touch with a halfpenny public. At one time Mellish would have laughed at the idea of ever making his profession that of writing on racing, but he found his *métier* and is one of the soundest authorities. Many years ago, when giving an imitation of the various methods of turf correspondents, Mellish was one of the first I singled out and the recognition of who the writer was intended to be in a spoof article was quite easy, owing to two or three Dickens quotations being brought into it. Robin Goodfellow is a thorough Dickens student, and perhaps no man has called on his memory more to find apt phrases which shall define a situation.

I have often envied his capacity for making copious notes of what he hears or is told, these being put down in shorthand may serve more to memorise something he wants to put into his article than for subsequent reference. He has always been a man to weigh up many things he wishes to say before putting them

“ ROBIN GOODFELLOW ”

down on paper. That may be his caution, but at the same time he has spoken more strongly about various incidents which have occurred on the turf than many of his contemporaries. A few years back very hot reference was made by a speaker at the Gimcrack Dinner to what had appeared in the *Mail*, and “ Robin’s ” friends chaffed him that he would not be given the access as before to Newmarket Heath. Of course that was all chaff, but the plain speaking was not ignored by thoughtful people who were in a position to take his remarks as very serious.

There have been so many of them. Many have met poor Trevelyan, formerly “ Kettledrum ” of the *Sporting Chronicle*. He went to America, and became a stipendiary steward, after occupying a position given to him by the late Mr W. C. Whitney on the *New York Morning Telegraph*, for which he was paid the useful salary of fifty pounds a week. He was very popular in racing circles over there right until he died. He was succeeded on the *Chronicle* by William Standing, who has associated with him in the work Neville, who writes the “ Travelling Correspondent’s ” notes, and various paragraphs. He is a very hard-working journalist; very positive; but, for that, who isn’t positive about racing? It is one of the redeeming features of being on the turf that we are supposed to have an opinion of our own.

I have mentioned Tommy Edge in a previous chapter. Alec Webster was for a long time a popular member of the *Sporting Life* staff, and at the time of writing runs with success a paper known as the *Racing Outlook*. The late Charles Warren was a well-known character. He had a caustic pen, and usually took a disgruntled view of racing situations. Like Mr Neville, who has just been mentioned, he was for some years

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associated with Mr Cuthbert Wilkinson on the *Racing World*. Warren was the first "Spearmint" of the *Weekly Dispatch*, but was succeeded by the sporting editor of the *Evening News*. Mr J. M. Dick—Johnny Dick—is a great authority on Association football, and was a player of skill himself in his day. He has made a real good position for himself by sheer ability, and keeping up to date with modern newspaper methods.

A brother of Charles Warren is now the sporting editor of the *Daily Express*, a chair I filled for many years in addition to being responsible for "The Scout." There were regrets on my part on resigning voluntarily, still it must be confessed that the duties were very onerous. At this point I may say that the number of invitations for dinner I had to decline were caused by the lack of knowledge of what awaited me on the return from a meeting near London. At Newmarket, Doncaster, Liverpool or Chester, for example, the editorial part of the sporting pages was left to a good fellow, my assistant, Walter Magson, who is the only original member at present of the editorial staff of the *Express*. But coming back from Ascot or Epsom there had to be the run through of what sporting news could be presented, the working up of a feature, then the writing of the racing article; subsequently there would be the reading of the proofs, for the responsibility of good taste, libel, and everything which appeared on the pages allotted to my department rested on me.

Then Sundays were a bit of a nightmare. During the winter at one time there was an idea of presenting football dressed in a different way in the *Express* for the west of England, the Midlands, the north and for London. The "lino." went on at two o'clock (for the

DAILY JOURNALISM

uninitiated I would explain that this meant the linotype operators began their duties four hours earlier than usual). We used to begin work at nine o'clock on Sunday morning and my usual time for finishing was midnight. Of course there was an extra staff, but the experience while it lasted was the reverse of pleasant. All the different stories had to be cut down or elaborated for different parts of England, and the "plates" of two pages had to be changed three times. There was even the endeavour to get in minor football. It did not last many months, thank goodness! It was one of those many schemes tried by halfpenny papers to attract circulation, but I shall always think that it was a mistake. Those who buy London papers wish to read what a serious daily journal published in the metropolis has to say about what primarily interests the majority of Londoners and readers in the home counties. If they wish to read what, for instance, Devonport Albion has done, they will get either a copy of a Plymouth paper or a football journal, but it cannot be expected, and is not reasonable, that a London footballer buying a London paper on a journey in the west of England wishes to have half-a-column or more of some unimportant western fixture, which is of really local interest.

I am mentioning this in particular to explain that some racing writers have not nearly finished when they leave a racecourse. Of course there are many we know on the racing Press who have to peg away at it all the afternoon at the meeting they may be at, keeping their work right up to the minute, but I think that when the time is available to write the daily article after the last race, or last race but one, is over, that it is always preferable. There is a much better impression of the day's doings, besides which, the time can be so

MORE RACING WRITERS

profitably spent in the paddock or Tattersalls finding out exactly what is happening and what the impressions of others may be. There is always the chance of meeting owners and trainers and getting a pointer. In the case of those who work all the afternoon in the Press room they have nearly finished when they leave.

It is impossible to mention all those I have met with on the English racing Press, and there must be no offence if one or more has been left out. I can see them all sitting round in that Press room at Ascot, Epsom or Newmarket doing their work. That good fellow, Jim Smith, who doubled the part of "Vigilant" and the article in the *Morning Post* for some time, is a son of "Rosebery" Smith. Jim Smith once laughed at me at Goodwood for fancying White Eagle for the St Leger, and laid me a hundred to seven: he had to back the horse back. Poor fellow, he has suffered in health distressingly. He knows everyone and, apart from his knowledge, he is, I suppose, the neatest worker of them all; how the telegraph operators must bless him.

Then there is the excellent Phipps—capable paragraphist and friend of all sorts of people. He loves his London life and his long winter holiday abroad. He was the loudest and most sincere in giving me his fullest sympathy over my experiences with that "darn" club at Newmarket—and he meant it.

"Charlie" Green is a veteran of the sporting Press. He is one of the most valued members of the *Sportsman* staff. He it is who supplies all the arrivals and scratchings, as well as many other odd bits of information without which the best part of the daily Press of the kingdom would starve, for it must not be supposed that each paper gets its own information. They rely

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS

on the "services" they subscribe to. Charles Green is the trusted of all racing executives, and is the real go-between in all matters in which the various administrations wish to deal with the Press. It is Green who will arrange for many little matters on a racecourse; the Press luncheon tickets, or the notice that such-and-such a thing is to happen. He is reported to be well endowed with this world's goods and "could retire to-morrow." How many of his *confrères* on the Press could say the same? They wish to God that they could. He hears such a lot of news and takes it at what it is—simply news for the public. He will give a tip occasionally, but it is so incidental that he never gets down from that news-gathering position which makes the real Press reporter.

It is a pity that there are no sinecures into which members of the Press could be planted. They are most worthy objects for recognition by the various bodies they have consistently boosted, from the Jockey Club downwards. They are quite right to give the fullest support to the "governing body of the turf"—isn't it lovely that repetition of the rounded phrase! Seriously though, for consistently saying: "his Majesty the King," the "august body" (the "J. C."), the "enterprising executive," "the genial Mr So-and-so" (the luncheon merchant), there should be some soft jobs flying around for old age. I tell you that I wouldn't be above taking one some day, but I might get impatient with it, or want to do in the day's fee over a ten-to-one chance.

Have I left anyone out? I have spoken about Archie Franklin. There is "Gipsy" Lyndall, compiler of the "form" of horses in book form, which it is absurd to think any other man could do. An argument in a minute and a fiver for a pal if he's broke is

MORE RACING WRITERS

his watchword. A most discerning man ; his glasses are never out of focus. He knows how to live, and will never be a " piker," nor ever " walk home."

Meyrick Goode, gentleman jockey and knowledgeable racing authority, is one of the mainstays of the *Sporting Life*. He is a nephew of Alfred Day, and grandson of the great John Day. Goode could ride a gallop when he was a child and yet when he first came racing with a newspaper job they—the fogeys—asked : " Who the devil is this young feller ? What on earth can he know about a horse ? " The same critics' idea of horsemanship was derived absolutely from the Lowther Arcadian structure with spots they had just bought for an abnormally developed heir. Meyrick Goode has been endowed with a sunny disposition which has helped many a less observant man over the stile. He has his good days and his bad weather, but can smile at Sutton with his neighbour, the aforementioned Lyndall.

Who doesn't know the cheery " Arthur"—Abrahams—whose manners are perfect, whether he is simply announcing the runners, obliging by doing a sovereign commission, or agreeing with a tip we wish to impart ? Nature's gentlemen are born, not created by the rubbing together of stony-hearted adversity. His son who goes to the post and notes the faults of the starter (oh, papa !) is a worthy son.

I could say so much in appreciation of Pearce of the Press Association—always alive for news—and Lane, the father of that renowned actress, Miss Grace Lane. Mr Lane does similar work for the Press Association to that which Mr Green does for the *Sportsman*. Then there is Jim Flood MacCarthy, with his Irish witticisms, long moustache and cigar, always ready

FLUB-DUB NEWS STORIES

to accompany one to have or to buy what isn't sold in the Press room.

On big days we were accustomed to see an influx of men of various ages who were switched on, to call a race-horse "it," and who generally "botched" the story of a good day. As a rule they hadn't the slightest idea of what they were writing about, but so long as they got hold of a few "names," and could juggle with some "think" story, they escaped dismissal. It is such absurd folly to send young men down to do an "Ascot" story or a "Derby" story who know nothing at all about it. I was always glad to do what I could for them, as the majority were so perfectly hopeless. Even the late Fletcher Robinson, intimate friend of C. Arthur Pearson, and on his staff at the *Express* at a big salary, had a crass ignorance of racing and what he had come to see. He wrote good stories in the magazines, and had a certain capacity, but it was absurd to depute even he to write the "word picture" of a Derby. Various young men in turn have their expenses paid to do these articles, but dismal failure is the usual result. The precedent of the usual flub-dub of a news story dies hard, and will exist, I suppose, for a long time yet. It is the same when the English Cup Final at the Crystal Palace comes round. It is a time-worn idea that the public wishes to know how much bread, how much in "cwts." of pork pies, and how many hard-boiled eggs are sold. It's all hog-wash. Some of them have manners on Derby Day, some haven't and want to take the front chairs on the Press stand. Can you beat it?

One thing many of us could never make out—who has done the articles in *Truth* for the past few years? There must be merit in them, because they are so

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discussed. Allison of the *Sportsman* has become warm over them, and never tires of calling the writer the "Anserous One." I have laughed, and tried to draw a retort by calling the writer "she," but the invisible coat remains, and *Truth* still comes out with the biting remarks to provoke members of the Conservative racing Press into retorts; that's not unclever of *Truth*, and gives the publicity which is worth so much. At one time I felt the same inclination to be drawn into an argument and a quotation of the *Truth* articles, but wisdom prevailed. I would buy *Truth* and be amused, and after all, isn't that the great attractiveness of printed matter or a play—to amuse us? However absurd I found certain ideas expressed, they were tickling—so why rush in to get a woman—or man—out of the job? Hardly anyone living could get the same notoriety: that is devilish ingenuity on the part of a proprietor.

As Mr John Corlett, for many years the doyen of the sporting Press, has practically retired, he has been left until after others. For many years he was the best known of all, and now can claim more acquaintances perhaps than others. As owner of the *Sporting Times* for so many years he amassed a comfortable fortune, having many brilliant young men around him at various times: the late Shirley Brooks, the late Willie Goldberg and others. Then look at the inimitable "Pitcher," Arthur Binstead, of *Town Topics*. His memory goes back years, and he has the capacity for writing nonsense prose in a most distinguished way. Every phase of life is known to him. Then there is Horace Leonard, capable handicapper and weigher up of winning chances; he is another on the new paper.

Mr Corlett sold the *Sporting Times* and broke the

THE VETERAN JOHN CORLETT

feelings of certain members of his staff who came to the idea that they might have been given the opportunity of acquiring it. There was only one course, and that to start a new venture, and in this scheme they were fortunate enough, through the good offices of Harry Preston of Brighton, to know that five thousand pounds was theirs towards the exploitation, this put up by Mr Kennedy Jones. It was great luck, and the paper has gone ahead on sheer ability. It was no light thing to butt in and bring out yet another twopenny paper. Apparently they have succeeded.

Mr Corlett, apart from running a very bright paper for many years, has ever been a sound racing authority, and an owner for years and years. He never seemed to get a real good horse, nevertheless won races. His staff could chaff him with impunity; in fact, it made good copy for the *Pink 'Un*. If I might criticise, however, we used to hear a little too much about the individual members of the staff, but against this there was usually a good story on the peg which was taken. On one occasion I had to have a little tilt against Mr Corlett through our lawyers over a perhaps unconscious libel, but it was all settled satisfactorily, and the *Pink 'Un* apologised, and there was no bad feeling of any kind afterwards. John Corlett has been always sure of a listener, an excellent after-dinner speaker—of the Victorian type.

There have been more recent comers. One is Captain Browne, of the *News of the World*, who does a bit of horse-dealing. He can be usually seen with Allison of the *Sportsman*. Then there is the new writer on the *Morning Post*, "Watchman," who seems to get plenty of news, to judge by the way he is quoted: an efficient journalist he. Richardson, courtly gentleman, a hard rider to hounds and a good fellow,

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is one of the older brigade. Rabuela, the "Asmodeus" of the *Standard*; Humphries of the Press Association, acquainted with everybody connected with a stable; Tom Winterburn, the new "Larry Lynx" of the *People*, and others.

CHAPTER XLI

CRITICISMS OF OWNERS

Irresponsible Slanders—Mr J. B. Joel and Dean Swift—The Old Gelding and the "City"—Faith in Your Majesty—Mr W. Hall Walker and Polar Star—The "Best Horse I ever owned"

FOR the most part I have found the true spirit of camaraderie exist among those on the racing Press. Of course there are the exceptions with "kinks"—those who would seldom, if ever, make friends, and would not be above getting someone else's job if they could—before that job was vacated; yet taking it all round there must inevitably be "a few" in a rather extensive crowd. There are the occasional little differences of opinion—I will not say petty jealousies. Then a writer may fall foul of an owner or a trainer, or over-criticise a jockey. But no member of the Press is ever as hard in words as those among the general public. Has it ever struck you that on occasions we hear the greatest abuse of inoffensive men by people who do not even know them by sight, and as to being acquainted with any incidents of the other's daily lives, well, they don't even know the butler's sister-in-law. Owners known by name to the general public remain with the majority mere names, but stay-at-home backers get into that bad habit of wishing to be known as possessing more racing connections than others. It is this enterprising spirit, and the delight of posing as having special information, which causes the man in the street to magnify any little intelligence he may possess, and some of them are most ingenious.

CRITICISM OF OWNERS

The number of slanders which can be uttered are incredible.

I remember hearing a man once go as far as saying that Dean Swift was "not on the job" for a certain City and Suburban. He knew it, he said, beyond question, and all the wisecracks wagged their heads and said it was a "b—— shame," and that Joel was "hot stuff." Apart from the preposterous nature of such a statement, I happened to have called at 34 Grosvenor Square the afternoon before the "City," and the owner of Dean Swift had told me that the only thing he thought could stop his horse winning was that a man would come out of the crowd and shoot him. He won. Does it ever appeal to you that a millionaire would give anything to see his favourite horse win, altogether apart from the bets he might win?

Dean Swift was something more than an ordinary horse to Mr Joel, he was one of those who helped his racing fortunes. With regard to the City and Suburban, he won twice, and was placed on four other occasions, and that is the animal the pot-house knocker was talking about and the owner he was abusing. "Jack" Joel, as he is known to his intimate friends, has a great affection for certain animals he owns, and would give a big sum for one of them to succeed. Another horse whose career he followed with unusual interest was Your Majesty. In 1908 he won the Leger with him after having taken a race at Ascot and the Eclipse Stakes as well. He would argue unceasingly as to what a good horse the son of Persimmon really was, and laughed at me for thinking that White Eagle had a chance of beating him; in a previous chapter I have stated how White Eagle perhaps lost the race through being sent to run in a race at Derby the previous week. That was always Mr Atty Persse's

“ POLAR STAR ”

idea—he trained him—but Mr Hall Walker has ever had his own views where and when his animals shall be sent. I am quite aware that the excuse may be made on occasions that it may be an owner's fault, and I must tell a story apropos of this which is a bit against myself.

I had written in the *Evening Standard* in 1906 when Polar Star was winning all his two-year-old races that it was a thousand pities the colt had not been left in the Derby after being entered, and that Mr Hall Walker had not “exercised a wise discretion in this respect.” The owner wrote to me from the House of Commons a private letter, but there is no breach of confidence in saying that he stated if it had not been for him Polar Star would have been gelded; instead of that he finished up his turf career brilliantly and is now siring many winners out in the Argentine. He added that Polar Star when a yearling was such a weed that his trainer thought nothing of him, hence the suggestion which was not carried out that the colt should be “added to the list.” At the same time it was deemed useless to keep him in the classic races. My criticism therefore—or rather lament—was undeservedly directed against the owner. It wasn't a question of blame, it was simply an error of judgment which in the circumstances was perhaps no error at all on the part of either owner or trainer.

If ever a man deserved to win the Derby it is Mr Hall Walker. He has won three classic races, but has yet to win the Derby and Two Thousand. I suppose Black Arrow was his greatest disappointment. He did extraordinary things at home, and he told me, in the same letter I have just referred to, that he considered him the most wonderful animal he had ever owned, and nearly the best he had ever seen.

CRITICISM OF OWNERS

Returning to Mr J. B. Joel's personal judgment, I was in his private luncheon-room at Ascot on the last day of the meeting, and he said: "What do you think I did last night? I wired for them to send Pure Gem back again to take his chance in the Alexandra Plate. It was entirely my own idea, and we'll see how it works." Pure Gem won all right, winning a stake of over fifteen hundred pounds, besides the bets. It had not been a good week for the owner, and he saw one good thing after another go down. It may be mentioned that Pure Gem had run down the course in the Ascot Stakes on the previous Tuesday, and had been sent home only to return again to win. Morton had quite a troop of horses at the meeting, but had only won one race until the Friday, when Portland Bay took the Wokingham and then Pure Gem followed in the long distance race. It has been a great score for Mr Joel to be in the prominent position he has been among owners during the last few years. Whether he will get his money back over Prince Palatine further reminiscences by myself or others will be able to chronicle, but he makes few mistakes.

I have brought these few incidents apropos of the absurd canards levelled against owners with whom it is a pleasure to win, especially with certain animals.

CHAPTER XLII

TATTERSALLS' ENCLOSURE

Dispersing Fortunes—Richest Man To-day—Amateur Bookmakers—
The Baronet on the Rails—"Ladbroke's"—The Late Dick Dunn—
The Lapses of "Lakey"

TATTERSALLS' enclosure is a peaceful garden, a real "reserved lawn" to what it was in former days, and so, too, is the cheaper ring. The ticket snatcher has been suppressed, and even the smallest amateur knows that he can give his name with his cash wager and not take a ticket, thus establishing an *entente* between himself and one of the enterprising layers on the outskirts of the market. For the knowledge of those who may not be quite so familiar with the racecourse as others, it might be said that there is nothing like the money in the ring to-day that there was a generation ago. Of course extra competition is partly the cause of this, but the vast fortunes made have been distributed by bequests to what have frequently been large families, and the money has thus drifted into other channels. Take men like Peech, Steel, George Herring and many others; immense fortunes have gone.

The richest man to-day is reckoned to be Mr Pickersgill. He is interested in many large commercial enterprises in Leeds, where he lives, and by an easy process of reckoning might be a millionaire. I have to look up and down to find the next most wealthy. George Turner, of Turner & Robinson, is a rich man, and so is the owner-bookmaker, Charles Hibbert. I

TATTERSALLS' ENCLOSURE

am only taking them at hazard, but there are plenty of others whose names would be taken for just as much money if they pledged their credit. Of course there is always the fascination of lingering on the rails to see what is being done by owners and commissioners, such as Charles Mills and others, but for life and bustle it is frequently more interesting to be in the bustle of the centre where men like Ike White, Albert Marks, Harry Lewin, Joe Barnett, and others, including the Alldens, have their pitches. Here there is frequently a better pointer to a winner by watching quick rush-tactics than the more methodical process where the rails divide Tattersalls from the club enclosure. Very frequently, too, there is more liberality extended in the "crowd." It is possible on occasions for the average of the odds not to beat us, and an intuition as to a likely favourite can be taken advantage of directly they open their mouths, and double the odds procured by snapping up an offer at once.

Since the suppression of amateur bookmakers in the club enclosure they have had to continue their business on the same level as the so-called professionals. A baronet, Sir Patrick Blake, shouts the odds and takes the bets just the same as his rivals. Then there is Charles Hince, who had with him the last time I saw him the excellent Tom Diamond, who once was in rather a big way on his own.

Then there is Jack Hampton, who is connected with the largest firm in London, Ladbroke's, Old Burlington Street. The business done by this firm is stupendous. Profits in one year have been known to be as high as sixty thousand pounds. Such a business could not be carried on without the most perfect organisation. Ladbroke's is to an extent a single-handed affair—with regard to head management and



CHARLES MILLS

The leading "Commissioner" in the Ring



“ LADBROKE’S ”

commanding vote, Mr Arthur Bendia, the promoter, being in this fine position. The firm has absorbed many established businesses, and the former heads of these have thrown in their lot with the parent concern, so that the Ladbroke's of to-day is one big amalgamation, or rather absorption. Mr Bendia is a man of unusual cleverness, with the capacity to make and keep a clientèle. His concern has had even the enterprise to place a charming lady on the rails at some meetings, while the aforementioned Jack Hampton, Tommy Graves and others can be seen in Tattersalls. Charlie Wyatt (late of Regent Street), Fred Thompson, artist and playwright, who wrote *Eightpence a Mile* for the Alhambra, are to be found at the head office. Here, by the way, a most excellent luncheon is served daily for the heads of the staff. Every Friday evening, too, after the business of sending out accounts is over, there is *carte blanche* in the way of a late dinner at Romano's, the bills for which all go in to Hanover Square.

Betting has indeed undergone a great change. I am not sure, but on the average the man who bets S. P. may do just as well, and it saves such an immensity of bother. I have seen it work both ways of course, but given that a man is on the course to get the latest inspiration, he can be sure of almost as good an average of odds, and he stands and abides by it. Of course on occasions there is the allurements to rush in and take a price which is obviously a good one, but, week in week out, there is not much in it, and the repose is worth something.

Perhaps there are not the personalities in the ring which there were. There is no exact equivalent for Dick Dunn, perhaps one of the best remembered of bettors. He was supposed to be distinguished for his

TATTERSALLS' ENCLOSURE

flowery diction, but his vocabulary on occasions consisted only of interjections, not oaths. He loved society and every bit of the knowledge he had of various places he went to. He knew exactly what was expected of him: at Newmarket a dance, if possible; at Yarmouth it was a smoking concert; here and there were other functions.

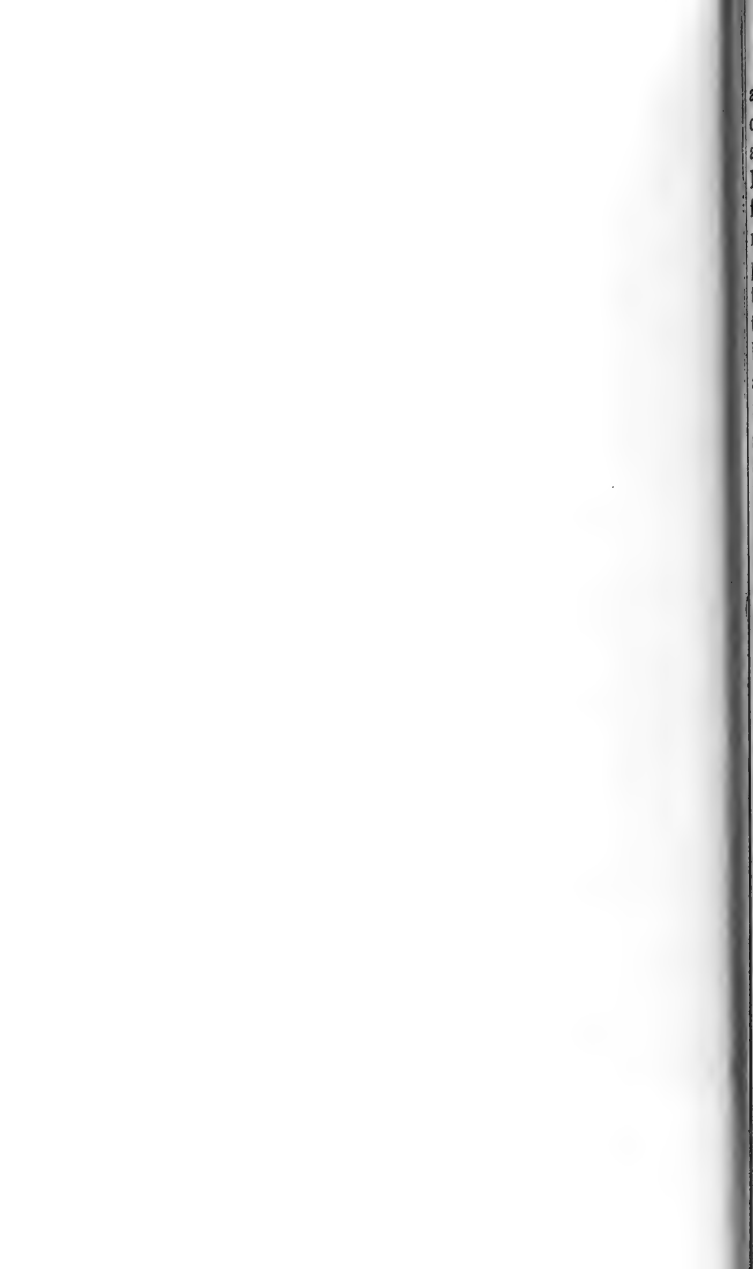
There is a great story about one of Dunn's visits to Manchester. He was always very fond of the theatre, and he had a certain idea just before he left the old New Barns racecourse, and said to his clerk: "Look here, Lakey; instead of going round with the boys to-night, I am going to book two stalls for the Princes Theatre. I have always told you to bring your dress clothes with you, and you'll put them on. Come and have a bit of dinner with me, and we'll go in style to the show." Lakey demurred, but there was no refusal, for Dick became insistent. The seats were far back, bordering on the pit. The first act was over and one of Lakey's pals in the front row of the cheaper seats cried: "Lord love us, if that ain't old Lakey sitting with the toffs; all in splendid dress too." Then he shouted: "Cheero, Lakey! 'Ow d'yer feel?" "Feel as if I were doing six munphs," was the disconsolate reply.

Dick Dunn had always a fixed idea as to how he would spend his evening, which was an important part of the day to him, and it must be said that whatever the luck had been he always came up cheery. Towards the end he never seemed to have much good fortune. I met him outside his house at Molesey one Saturday afternoon, and asked him how he got on at Salisbury. "The expenses," he said, "were forty-nine pounds ten shillings, and I won forty-nine pounds—if I get it all. It's always on the wrong side." That



Carroll H. H. Co. N. Y. 1887

THE LATE DICK DUNN



THE LATE DICK DUNN

about describes his experiences in the last few years of his life. But, despite this, would he ever take advantage of those he knew? Not on your life! I remember once at Gatwick, of which I was a member for many years, going across to the lower end of the rails where he stood that day—it was an infrequent pitch—and said: “What will you lay me Sona?”—that wasn’t the name of the horse though. He didn’t take the slightest notice, and I repeated the question, but he was still quite deaf to me. I added with some asperity: “I asked you for thirty pounds to five pounds Sona.” But still he looked at everything and everyone save myself. I began to think that it was a question of credit, but that couldn’t be, for the five-pound note had been much in evidence. Then I said, not to be balked: “Take this fiver and put me down sixes.” Under his breath he said: “*Will* you go away?” And I took the office. The filly was dead amiss that day, and Dunn knew it. He was such a good fellow that he wouldn’t have me lose the fiver. There are so many stories about him that chapters could be filled if they were all dug up, but little instances are sufficient.

There must be just one more of the man who I bet with from the earliest days I went racing, over thirty-five years ago. At one time, things had been going a bit badly with Dick, and one or two cheques had been held back by him just for an odd day or two until he could collect at Epsom on the first day. One of his clients came up to him and said rather pompously: “Mr Dunn, I have not had my cheque for that eighty-five.” “That’s the most extraordinary thing,” Dunn replied; “for I remember quite distinctly asking my clerk whether you spelt your name with a final ‘e,’” and turning round to the inevitable Lakey, who had been looking round as if unconscious of the conversation,

TATTERSALLS' ENCLOSURE

Dunn nudged him in the ribs, saying : “ You remember, don't you, that little question of mine when we were sending off that cheque on Sunday afternoon ? ” There was a pause, and his clerk gave off this immortal speech : “ Mr Dunn, you are the father of a family, and might be a churchwarden, and you are my gov'nor and you can give me the sack if you like, but—you're a b——y liar ! ”

CHAPTER XLIII

PAST AND PRESENT LAYERS

Alec Harris and "The Major"—"Me and You Private"—Advantage of Manners—The Late George Cooper—Nature's Gentleman and the Nobleman—Loo Levy—Honour in the Ring—Backing a Small Man—My Expected Cheque

THE late Alec Harris, who left well over one hundred thousand pounds, and had a charming house in Bloomsbury Square, could be very humorous on occasions, especially in the intervals of racing, when he felt that something was necessary to brighten up things. He was perpetually being asked for quotations from a man who was known in Tattersalls as "The Major," and he *was* a major. He would come up when Harris was busy and ask for a quotation. "What price So-and-so, Harris?" but never had a bet. One day at Epsom he had put the usual queries, but there happened to be a long wait, with nothing much doing. "What price Blank?" asked the Major. "Six to one," said Harris; "six pounds to one pound, Major. Come on, Major; me and you private; never mind the book." And, as the gallant officer moved away, Harris stepped down from the rails and followed him all over the ring, calling out: "Here you are, Major; don't go anywhere else; six pounds to one pound that one, *me and you private*, you know *private*, nothing to do with the book. You don't seem to understand," he added, as he almost ran after the rapidly disappearing punter: "*me and you*." But the Major had skidooed, never again to put a ridiculous query to the well-known layer of odds.

One of Harris's daughters is married to Arthur

PAST AND PRESENT LAYERS

Ansell, who was clerk to his father-in-law for some time. Bert Ansell, who clerked for his brother for years, is quite an excellent step dancer and comedian.

Jack Langley is one of the most satisfactory men to bet with; he always has a charming manner, but for the matter of that manners altogether have improved on the racecourse. Mr Langley is a strong man in local government at Marlow, where he lives, and is altogether a good fellow. He is the same to all, big men and lesser lights; that is the charm of him. This cannot be said for all of them. One firm I know can be slavishly sycophantic to some and at the same time be most brusque to others, who may have been of use to them in one way or the other. One man I have in my mind pestered me until he got an introduction to a man who had just come racing, and was rich. Nothing in the way of politeness was good enough for some time, and then, when his business with the particular backer-owner fell off, I have asked him for a few long shots—prices I could get anywhere—and he would become perfectly mannerless. Manner has a lot to do with any sort of business or profession, and there is no doubt the cultivation of politeness is a great asset, even to the humblest layer of odds in Tattersalls or in the small ring. The big men are accustomed to deal with big people, and so many go racing nowadays that even the smaller layers have their share of good customers.

There are a few in the present day who follow the methods of the old school of cash layers and shout after a client when he is dissatisfied with what he is offered. This is most disconcerting to the beginner, and to many of these novices a bookmaker can be a terrorising person, to be approached with much trepidation. I think, however, that some of the brusqueness is due to the fact that everything is done so quickly

THE LATE GEORGE COOPER

that there is insufficient time to consider the smaller acts of courtesy in which they are not lacking in private life. There is one member of the ring whom some ladies have a holy horror of; believe me that a few of those he has treated with something like rudeness get a bit back when they can by dissuading men from doing business with him.

I referred just now to those who had died in recent years, and consequently a large sum had left the ring. George Cooper, who left about a quarter of a million, and died about five years ago, was as well known in Brighton as in London or in Manchester or Liverpool. He was very charming to those who were winning money from him or those who owed him large sums. There was always the feeling on the part of many backers that they need not keep out of his way if there was an adverse balance against them. One little incident, while it does not exactly illustrate this, serves to show the spirit of sympathy and patience George Cooper had towards some of his debtors. A certain young nobleman went to stay with his mother at the Hotel Windsor at Monte Carlo. He saw sitting at a table near by a man whose face seemed familiar to him and he nodded. After dinner Lord — met the other Englishman in the smoking-room, and they talked about different things for an hour or two, this being continued for about the same time for two evenings afterwards. The younger man was much puzzled to know exactly who he was talking to, and on the third night said: "I'm awfully sorry; we recognised each other directly I came here, but you must forgive me as for the life of me I can't recall exactly who you are." "My name is George Cooper, my lord," and by the courtesy of the last two words it was the first indication that Cooper had given that *he* had recognised his young

PAST AND PRESENT LAYERS

aristocratic acquaintance. The latter said: "I'm frightfully sorry; it's too ridiculous, for I'm afraid that I have owed you eight hundred pounds for over a year; I haven't been racing since." George Cooper hastened to reassure him: "I'm perfectly certain, my lord, that will be all right, as I suppose you'll pay me some day." And then at once switched the topic off to something else.

Can you beat such perfect manners? Could you picture the few of the little friends we know nowadays sitting near: they would be waiting outside the restaurant door to claim an eight-hundred-pound debtor. This is not said feelingly, for the experience of a lifetime is that men in the ring will show a great deal more kindness to a man who is under the weather than many of those who do their business staying at home. Of course in the latter category you must not think that such men as Loo Levy and his brother Ted and a few others are included. Loo is a little prince in his way, and I should say quite the most popular of all turf commission agents, whether he be in his office or in Bohemian resorts. In his business he is liberal in odds and accommodating, and outside 46 Pall Mall is a wonderful host. Good nature and extraordinary amiability endear him to a circle of friends, in the number of which he is to be envied. I should say that he hadn't an enemy, nor even one who would give him what might be called the knocking word, either under disappointment or any temporary annoyance.

Ted Levy, who is partner in the biggest firm of advertising bookmakers, is different in personality to Loo, but resembles the other in all the good nature and sympathy for friends' and clients' luck. How Ted would miss the Tivoli when it closed in this year of 1914 to be rebuilt. It was quite his evening club. Loo is



“Loo” LEVY



HONOUR IN THE RING

a great man at first nights, and all the Bohemian functions which take place. Both the brothers have built up their success on sheer merit.

Heathorn in Piccadilly has had a great deal to do with the success of the Globe Club in Shaftesbury Avenue. This place has been a great attraction, as it is so well placed. They are getting an increasing membership of substantial men every year, as their annual dinners show unmistakably.

In all the abuse levelled against racing, perhaps the most undeserved charge is, that those who go racing and bet must of necessity be lacking in those moral attributes which contribute to financial integrity. Now, taking the racecourse section of backers and layers, I do not suppose there is a more honourable body of men existing in an English-speaking country. "Bargains"—that is, wagers—are laid and taken with a precision worthy of a purchase at, say, the Wool Exchange. It is a most unusual thing for a bet to be disputed; even then, either part, as a rule, will take the decision of a mutual friend where there has been a slight misunderstanding as to what really occurred.

There is a code of honour on a racecourse, the meaning of which is most difficult to explain to the uninitiated, but it may be summed up in the explanation that, as so much depends on the future, it is a necessity to take somebody else's word and to be believed oneself. From the biggest men on the rails who lay wagers to moneyed clients, to the smallest men in Tattersalls' ring there is a wish to be thought well of, and the whole good-will of a business may consist in obtaining confidence, so that there should not be the slightest diminution of turn-over, but rather the advertisement of reliability which shall gain them clients. The small man who deals in cash as a rule

PAST AND PRESENT LAYERS

delights in paying—in nineteen cases out of twenty this is done—with the best grace possible. From an experience in many lands I am quite sure that the cheerful “parter” is the man to obtain the most patronage.

When looking round some of the smaller men who still cling to Tattersalls' enclosure it is remarkable how they can keep going with the small business they have, the lack of capital and the heavy expenses, but somehow they find backers. A few years ago, when on the *Express*, I had eighty pounds to draw for a week's settling from a small Tattersalls' layer. On the Monday morning the cheque was not there, but by the first post on that day came a letter from a man, evidently of good position and financial status, asking for advice. Did I “really think that So-and-so was honourable and straightforward?” He mentioned the name of the very man who owed me the money. My correspondent told me that he had supported this bookmaker several times, but he could scarcely believe that the luck was so persistent that it all went in laying against horses. He added that he awaited my letter before financing the man any further. Here was a difficult situation. In a position of responsibility in connection with a leading daily paper I had to be very circumspect before committing myself to definite opinions on such delicate topics as this. It was inevitable that the thinking cap would have to be put on. To any man who works for his living, and who sits up late and burns midnight oil writing for proprietors, a sum like eighty pounds is money; it greases the wheels and keeps one going in the little comforts of life, without which one is a very dull fellow and void of inspiration. My cheque had not come. A favourable letter from me would possibly help the financed one

MY EXPECTED CHEQUE

along, and in due course my cheque which was late would arrive. Here was the material benefit to be derived ; but I could not afford to enter upon any expressions of opinion which might " come back " on me. So, pushing the letter aside, I decided that it were better to sleep on the situation at all events. A little later in the morning I sent a formal acknowledgment, with just an added remark that I had " always found So-and-so a very straightforward man." As regards the direct query I did not give an answer, knowing full well that a lot of layers have the temptation of " mixing it "—that is, backing and laying. The letter had no sooner been stamped and despatched than the belated cheque arrived. Possibly the sportsmen in question will notice this, but I have disclosed no names, and the whole matter may be one of conjecture. At all events, no confidences have been broken.

CHAPTER XLIV

TYPES ON A RACECOURSE

New Hands and Old Hands—Follow the Leader—Charles Hibbert—
Biggest Professional Backer—Charles Hannam—Sudden Crazes
—Betting as a Last Resource—Goudie and Others—Bank
Defalcations

RACECOURSES are generally very delightful to a man or a woman who either professionally or for pleasure or for profit of some sort—whether to health or pocket—goes to race-meetings regularly. One of the greatest delights is to go out into the paddock and greet acquaintances or friends. From your regular race-goer there is always a different greeting to that from the casual visitor who does not quite know the ropes. The latter will say, sort of under his breath: “Hallo, what are *you* doing here?”—which is as ridiculous as his lack of knowledge. One half of the world seems to use this expression, in a surprised sort of way that one person can possibly be existing in the same atmosphere as the other. It is not always meant, but some of those smug amateurs go to a race-meeting as if they were rather ashamed of it, and are quite surprised if they see one of their acquaintances walking about quite naturally: they are bad sailors hiring a yacht. To old hands, however, both men and women, there is simply a delight in comparing notes as regards the card. We all know the different types.

There is the woman always asking for tips, and there is the woman who delights in giving them. There is the man without the courage of his convictions and who endeavours to hear all he can so that he may hear too

NEW HANDS AND OLD HANDS

much in the end to warrant him having a wager. A certain class of veterans are very superior in their manner. They walk about with their hands in their pockets, looking at nothing and nobody, and to all intents and purposes very unobservant. They affect an absolute lack of knowledge, and I really believe that in some instances this is to hide their real ignorance. The man I cannot stand is he who just had a fiver or so on a loser and will tell you he has not had a bet for a fortnight. He says this in such a superior sort of way that you feel quite sorry for yourself if you have been weak and foolish enough to have punted on one or two runners. I often feel inclined to say to these persons: "*Why* have you not had a bet for a fortnight? Are you broke or is your credit stopped?" But courtesy all round pays in the long run, and one must never be too free in saying "clever things" when they might create coolness.

We all know the "I-told-you-so's" of both sexes, and they are very wearisome, because as a rule they are not funny. The best way to treat this type would be for a circle of their friends to surround them and force a tip on every race, and thus some "Mr, Mrs or Miss I-told-you-so" would be put in a very uncomfortable position and have to own up to fallibility.

The great art I have known some to possess in a marked degree is to approach trainers, jockeys or owners, and have the skill of talking apparently of nothing at all, yet obtaining all the information they require without directly asking it. Personally I never ask a question of anyone connected with a stable. Naturally such information is sometimes obtainable, but as a rule when it is volunteered it is generally the best of all tips. If you pester a person who should know something he will avoid you, but those people

TYPES ON A RACECOURSE

who seem to make a practice of it at all events might have the good taste to leave their queries as late as possible, so that they should not, in any case, forestall the crowd who are chiefly interested.

Many people I know who have been racing for some years never have an idea of their own. They will hang about different bookmakers who do a good business and watch what is going on, and they will frequently follow a "lead" blindly. Mind you, I don't say that they occasionally do not score rather heavily, but it seems impossible to me that a man can go through a long experience of racecourses and not be able to make his own deductions from form. Naturally, when they do this there would be no further use for the sporting prophet, but the total lack of personal inspiration seems to suggest that these people are gamblers only as opposed to judges of what a horse can do. If they do not learn in a year or two they will never learn, although at the same time there is always something new to acquire in the way of racing instruction.

Of quite a different type is Mr Charles Hannam, who relies on his own judgment more than following the trend of what others are doing. In fact he gives the lead. He will come to the conclusion that a certain horse can win, and back his opinions much as Mr Charles Hibbert will lay against—in fact pepper—a horse he doesn't think has a chance, in this respect going away from figures altogether. To those who go racing regularly, and see Charles Hannam with a card and pencil in his hand, it is known that, however sociable he may be off a racecourse, it is business only when in the ring or the club enclosures of which he is a member. He has an extraordinary aptitude for figures, and can tell in no time, from the odds offered, whether it is



CHARLES HANNAM

The man who has lost and *paid* £50,000 in a week



CHARLES HANNAM

possible to back two or three and beat the layers on the average. The work is arduous, for in addition to his own investments there are occasionally important commissions to do. Charles Hannam is a Bradford man who has the respect of all who go racing. His keen judgment enabled him some years back to amass a large fortune, a portion of which was successfully invested in business enterprises in his own county. It is no impertinence to say that in recent years he has not had the same success owing to the market not being such a liberal one for his operations.

The ordinary stay-at-home man will imagine him as jotting down a few bets, going off to have a drink, coming back and backing one or two others, and then perhaps spending his evening as he likes, with no more cares until racing starts next day. As a matter of fact Mr Hannam works assiduously, as he is a man of admirable methods. Getting up early every morning, he takes a light first *déjeuner* and spends the best part of the morning writing letters and telegrams. He does all this himself, as his business correspondence is sometimes of such a nature that he will not depute the task to a secretary. Taking his "grand breakfast" at or about noon, he is early on the racecourse, and when watching him there his face is inscrutable, and what passes rapidly through his mind one can only hazard a guess at. A temperate man, he only takes milk and soda at this early luncheon, and will not drink anything else till racing is over. After his tea at the usual hour the whole transactions of the day are transferred from the small book he carries with him to his day-book, ledger and cash-book, which are duly posted up with as much system as obtains in a well-ordered mercantile office. It is this system and method that has been part of his success and has developed that mathe-

TYPES ON A RACECOURSE

matical observation which causes him to read a market and the "average of odds" much more quickly than many of those with whom he fences for odds.

When a boy Mr Hannam was a junior clerk in a railway company, and started a small book with his colleagues as punters. Later he betted in silver in the ring, and when his operations became bigger, with his brother as clerk he moved into Tattersalls, but he soon got tired of this and became a backer, as his instincts had always been to support a horse instead of laying against him. By degrees he built up his fortune. Of course he has not always been on the smooth rail of success as regards speculation, and many know the story of one week how he lost vast sums at Ascot. To many this would have been a strong temptation to have "taken the knock," as his wealth was sufficient to do himself well all his life, but there was only a few hours' delay until securities could be realised and over fifty thousand pounds paid out. He told me the other day that he had lost in eight years out of the last ten, and yet "they won't believe me," he added.

It has always been to many a wonderful thing how backers can pay the big racing expenses and yet come out making a living year after year. Various people are pointed out, such as Charles Hannam and Fred Parker—the latter is a big gambler and sound judge; it would not be surprising to see him M.P. for Northampton some day: he is a strong local man—and many others larger or smaller; but believe me, as many fall by the wayside. I have told you of those who have their pet system and get financed, others come into a little bit of money and immediately go racing in the fond belief that they can hold their own. To begin with they have a totally



FRED PARKER
Strong in Politics at Northampton



CRAZY ON BACKING 'EM

insufficient experience of practical racing, and in some cases their ignorance is sublime. Occasionally there is a new backer or two coming into the ring. Some start with the reputation of having made a lot of money in some enterprise or other, and it is wonderful how a certain section of bookmakers will give them credit, but sooner or later there are missing accounts on settling day. Then again there have been men who, after years of abstinence from backing horses, will suddenly break out. Many of us knew a pleasant little man who used to be at Mrs Barker's, at the Queen's Hotel, Southport. He took a sudden craze before his death to dissipate a young fortune in a few weeks. He was always eccentric, I thought, and for a time no one believed that he was real crazy.

Others who have contributed to the profits of the ring have been those who, driven to the last stage of desperation, and robbing their clients, stealing their master's money or what not, have taken the last remaining hundreds which they could get hold of, and have gone racing with it. When eventually they have been brought to justice they have cried that their "position was brought about by getting on the turf." It is a canting wail which goes down with some, and especially anti-gamblers, who use such creatures as examples of how racing can bring about ruin, but the losers do not for the most part get into it until they have been thoroughly dished in trying to get rich quick at other games, at others' expense. They take a bit of ready money with them, and as a rule the end of the decline is soon reached, but those on a racecourse do not push them down. These broken reeds are simply one of a casual public who put their money on and draw if they win, but from insufficient knowledge—or ordained by Fate—lose what they have left. We are

TYPES ON A RACECOURSE

always hearing of the Goudie case. Certainly he got the *flair* for racing; he was "easy" for those who found him; but all the evidence showed that he had cultivated the taste for racing himself before he ever knew any of those who were incriminated. The chances are that he would have followed on one bit of stealing after another, and the same falsification of the books of the bank would have occurred to a big amount if he had never met those who were eventually charged for the "business." Goudie didn't squeal. He hid himself, but was found; had his sentence and died in prison.

Dick Burge, who was a sufferer, has thoroughly put himself right with the public. Old Marks, whom many will remember as sitting on a chair in the courtyard of the Cecil every morning and evening, is supposed to have slid overboard from a Channel steamer. The story was not believed at the time, but apparently that was his fate; in any case he was a very old man, and if he slipped away may have died within a few years. Another who was well known about Paris fifteen years ago as the "Colonel," and a champion draughts player, went to America, but the bank, which had lost over sixty thousand pounds, did not follow up the business, and, well, the whole thing has become an incident of the past. It is no part of these memories to exculpate anyone, but the sporting world, with few exceptions, was very sorry for Burge, and have been delighted that he could come back to the world an unbroken man, one capable of putting himself on his feet and looking at straight men with a straight eye.

I wrote a serial once called "The Getting Back Stakes," a hundred-thousand-word novel, the incidents of which were nearly in every way facts. One or two men came to me and said they "knew cases very similar, how a man of good breeding had attempted

THE TRUSTED CLERK

to make money out of an investment in a 'starting price office.'” The central figure in that novel was taken absolutely from life, and he saved himself by his native wit from a conspiracy which consisted of bringing in late wires and suppressing losing telegrams. A man in a big way of business has to trust his head men to the pitch of brotherhood, but nothing can be done, even with the perfect system to prevent fraud, if there be combination to this end. In the course of many years listening to others' woes there have been all sorts of incidents brought before me.

There is one man we know very well about town whose business was such a one-man affair that he had to put his whole trust in his clerk. That man apparently was devoted to him. The Guv'nor saw that his man made a good living, and even after the liberal wages were paid there was very often the query: "Is everything going right?" That is to say, an extra pound or two would be handed out ungrudgingly if there was any odd thing the clerk was up against. And yet one fine morning the trusted one disappeared with nine hundred and sixty pounds.

This reminds me that in the employ of a most eminent firm of bankers, the name of which is respected the world over, there have been many trusted subordinates employed at wages equal to that of branch bank managers. It was a blow to the amiability of the firm when one of them disappeared with many hundreds of pounds, and they determined to make an example. I trust it is not divulging inner information when I say another case entirely different occurred in the same establishment. In a certain department of that bank, by some mysterious means, sixty pounds, equalling three twenty-pound notes, disappeared one morning. All inquiry and search proved fruitless. It

TYPES ON A RACECOURSE

was a disquieting occurrence, but after a day or two the matter simmered down, with only the suggestion that one of the clerks had been guilty of carelessness. About three months afterwards the same official of the bank, whose position was worth perhaps £500 a year, called the chief of the department to his desk, and showed him a large open account-book, in which were three twenty-pound notes flattened out. The assumption was, of course, that the mystery had been cleared up, and there was general satisfaction—until later in the day, when the story went round the office, and another head of department, with the investigating mind, pointed out that the dates of the notes were, say, July, when their disappearance had occurred in May. There was nothing else for it but a resignation, but the chap in question, with his wife and family, were given a real good start in another land. Be it to his credit that he did not put down the cause of the trouble to racing: others did, but there was no truth in it.

CHAPTER XLV

IN THE CLUB ENCLOSURE

“Mr Once-a-Week”—Frank Curzon—Pigeon Pie at Epsom—Our Non-Stop Run—Racecourse Catering—Happy Days—At Southport

MANY who read the *Express* when I was “The Scout” remember that I named a man I knew “Mr Once-a-Week.” This was Jim Bradbury, known to all as an intermittent owner—of Emerald Ring and others—good fellow, member of the Badminton Club and careful investor. He never betted on handicaps, and confined himself to one good wager a week. It may have been over a two-year-old race, or a cup, or what not, but he couldn’t be drawn to have a bet on even the Cesarewitch or Cambridgeshire. He has frequently come up to me asking the best of the day, or whether there was really anything to touch. From cussedness I would mention my fancy for the big handicap of the day, and he would say: “My dear fellow, I don’t bet on handicaps. I thought you knew that.” Of course I did.

The one good bet a week, however, is not at all a bad idea, and has worked well. In a side show—a small paper—I ran for some time there used to appear every Monday a “best thing of the week,” and so many times it came off that “Mr Once-a-Week’s” views received much endorsement. The mystery as to the identity of the frequently alluded-to punter is now disclosed.

At the moment of writing, Mr Frank Curzon is

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meeting with some success with a horse named Cock of the Rock, a highly bred gelding he bought from Mr W. Hall Walker. Before this book is a year old Frank may have acquired a big string, and, who can tell, may some day win a classic race. He is very keen on racing, and never lacks courage to back what he has an idea of. There was a fine win for him over Sunstar, and there would have been another one if Craganour had not been disqualified for the Derby of 1913—in-
cidentally, the most desperate mistake ever made, more especially, of course, over a race like the Derby. Frank Curzon has limited his theatrical responsibilities to the Prince of Wales and Wyndham's Theatre and is, I should say, much happier in consequence. Of course there are good cheques constantly arriving from the rights he has over many musical comedies, etc., and his income is a large one.

Frank Curzon is very fond of his Epsom parties, and also those at Ascot; I have enjoyed his hospitality many times. There is always an undercurrent of cheerfulness and chaff going down or coming back in his car, especially if either of our mutual friends, Gerald du Maurier, Laurence Grossmith or Marsh Allen was also there. They got it up once for me at Epsom on account of my expressed liking for the pigeon pie served there; it is the best possible, and somehow I fell for it. At one meal my place was flanked round by several uncut pies, and it was difficult to get the end of the joke. I managed to get one in on the last day of a Newmarket July Meeting. When the car had left the racecourse for London we said to Frank: "Where do we stop for a drink?" "Nowhere," he replied; "this is to be a non-stop run. We all want to get back to London in good time, and I've told my chauffeur to go ahead." "But," I argued, "surely



The Peter Street Style - May 1911

FRANK CURZON
Owner, Impresario and Comrade



CLUB SOCIABILITY

it would only take us five minutes and—a drink would go so well.” “No,” he snapped, with a merry twinkle in his eye; “nowhere at all. I wouldn’t have a drink if we stopped, nor if it was here. And you boys don’t want one either. We shall be in London in less than an hour and three-quarters, and we’ll keep it until we arrive.” “But,” I protested, “if we want a drink and you don’t—isn’t it rather hard on us?” “We are all much better without it. I have got you now,” and he laughed. On we sped, but by the way we were looking at our watches and the milestones it was inevitable that some of us were thinking of the glass that was to be filled on arrival. Said I: “Sure you wouldn’t have a drink, Frank?” “Not a drop; not if you could offer me the finest ever.” “That’s all right,” I replied; “then there’s all the more for Marsh and me.” And I pulled out a flask of Napoleon brandy, and we toasted Frank, who turned his head away.

He used to run down to the club at Newmarket on occasions, and while he saw that, under the conditions, it was not likely to go on, he was very appreciative of everything which had been done to make it successful. Curzon has been a friend to more men than could be reckoned by putting up the hands a dozen times. Like Pinero he was an actor once, but there was not enough money in it for either of them. Why?

In all the talk there is about the comforts of French racing compared with that in England, and there is certainly an argument in favour of the former, it is chiefly on account of French courses being so accessible to Paris—in most cases every course is reached by an easy carriage journey. There is a lot to say, however, for the sociability on English tracks. The club enclosure is, as I have mentioned above, a real club, where every sort of thing can be discussed, and we can

IN THE CLUB ENCLOSURE

become jubilant over a success or sympathetic about a reverse. Another great attraction is the preliminary luncheon on an English course. In France, with the exception of Chantilly, ninety per cent. of race-goers take their *déjeuner* before going out to the races, thus what can be such a pleasant function here is missed over there. For the most part luncheons are well served in our club enclosures. "Father" William Bertram takes a pride in what he serves, and never spares any trouble or expense in obtaining good lobsters. When there are none he will say: "Sorry there are none to-day for you; there were only a poor lot of Dutchmen in the market this morning, not the things I would give." "Father" William is a great personality, and I have often wondered how he avoids backing half-a-dozen horses in a race, so many are the tips which are given him. He hasn't the facilities everywhere to cater in the way he would wish, but at Gatwick and Kempton in particular the kitchens are good, and he can serve the best. He took over Goodwood after Benoist. This is always a very big job, and in bad weather a most difficult undertaking. Good prices are obtained there, which is only as it should be, considering the haulage for miles up to the top of that hill where the racecourse is.

Mr Bertram has nothing to do with the catering on Epsom racecourse. It has long been a source of discussion, that luncheon charge in the public stands of six shillings; it is complained about as being an extortion. The food is good enough, though roughly served, but it is a bad impression to give visitors from abroad, for there is nothing attractive except in the food, which is of the best—the lobsters, the salmon, and especially the aforementioned pigeon pie. There would be just as much profit if the price were lowered to five shillings,

“HAPPY DAYS”

for it is a certainty that there would be thirty per cent. more business done. This scarcely comes into a book of reminiscences, but is noted chiefly that after generations can know the conditions in which we raced at the beginning of the twentieth century.

For many years it was my custom to pay a visit to Ostend, usually just after the London Cup Meeting at Alexandra Park, when there was a lull for a week or so, and a holiday could be prolonged if desired. Many a merry little party has left Charing Cross for Belgium with myself as one. I can recall so many who have accompanied me. Sometimes it has been to one hotel, and then to another—and in different company. Harry Otter—a brother of Frank—and Harmon Hargreaves (“Happy Days”) travelled over once with me, and it was a cheery time. “Happy Days”—always hospitable—excelled himself in the morning, because he would never allow us to have any of the cold bottle in his right hand unless we had a good sprinkling of the Perrier—the soft stuff—from his left hand; he had all sorts of theories about how the delicate stomach should be treated. Harmon Hargreaves originally hailed from Bolton, Lancashire, where his father was one of the most prominent citizens, much respected, and a most liberal supporter of local institutions, including the Bolton Wanderers F.C. I never came across a man map his year out more consistently than Harmon Hargreaves, who is as well known in club enclosures and to all the layers in Tattersalls as he is at Grindelwald, Davos and St Moritz—or Princes—as a competitor in winter sports. Hargreaves might be seen at Lincoln and Liverpool; then he would disappear—he would say we should not see him again—until Epsom. Cricket took the best part of his summer, at which he has been

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rather a don. After Epsom cricket claimed him again, and then Doncaster, and in the late autumn—hey! to Switzerland. That is what I call a well-ordered life. We met too at the Queen's, Southport, when many of us were there for the Liverpool Meeting. What a time it was in that billiard-room, with Joe Plant as the hare with a pack of hounds after him. Then again, what uproarious applause when John Thomas Crossley sang a song. It was one of the most comfortable houses possible, and the food the last word in quality. So many of us nearly wept when Mrs Barker—or rather Mrs Tom Barton, as she is now—came across the grey side of Fortune. But I am getting away from Ostend.

CHAPTER XLVI

AT OSTEND

Greek meeting Greek—The Popular Joe Marsh—Belgian Bookmakers—Taking Each Other on—The Comedy of Thirty-Seven Thousand Francs—Lord Torrington buys a Horse—The Late Jack Gourand—Abelard II.—Our Race to Doncaster—"T.'s" Marriage

IT has frequently been a source of wonder to more than myself how all the "boys" made a living out of Ostend. It seemed the place for a general rendezvous of every exploiter of a new fake, and the only hypothesis could be that like the celebrated parallel of a certain island, the inhabitants of which lived on doing the washing for each other, it was at Ostend the survival of the fittest, the merriest raconteur (in this case "most ingenious tale pitcher"), or the head which could stand most drink. In one hotel there were little schemes hatched which were "ready" for those who—did not come.

That boon companion, Joe Marsh, who has been mentioned in previous chapters, always stays at the Splendid. He is one of the best starters I have ever seen, and is a most agreeable companion, full of business on his working days, but ready to "relax" on his off days. Joe claims attention in many bypaths of racing, apart from starting and horse dentistry. As I have said, as a starter he has no superior, and very few equals. In Belgium, of course, there is the latitude given to the official at the tapes to send the horses off from a standing start or walk them up to the barrier, whichever he likes. He has a perfect under-

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standing, too, with the jockeys; they know so well that he will stand no "hank" that they do not attempt to put it across him. He enjoys the confidence of all the heads of the turf, and owners and trainers too.

The advantage of bookmakers in Belgium is appreciated, and without them the turf in that country would not flourish to the extent it does to-day. The various pitches are allocated according to which man—or firm—pays the highest fee, and to the others as they descend in amount. There is no difficulty in the way of credit if a man be known, and nothing against ready-money wagering. Occasionally there are onslaughts on the ring there, but for the most part the layers do well. The little "raids" usually occur at Ostend, but seldom on the courses around Brussels. I daresay many who read this are aware of a merry little bit of business which took place about five years ago. A certain little American with his wife arrived at Ostend, and in the course of the first evening ran across an Englishman, who was what might be called a fly mug. The latter thought he had something good on in the way of doing commissions for the innocent touring American, and propounded a scheme. A plan of campaign was entered into for the Sunday and Monday. The English "commissioner"—self-constituted—was emphatic about the good information he obtained, and in his enthusiasm at having found a rich client was most emphatic as to those with whom the little American—a pigeon straight out of the nest!—should speak on the racecourse; he was advised to remain exclusive, to which he readily agreed, with his tongue in his cheek, and winking at pals—the boys—who were in the offing. What a find—for both of them: a triumph for English enterprise in digging up a visiting racing plutocrat, and a score for an adventurous American

THE "RAT-TAT" AND—OFF!

to tumble straight into the arms of a man who treated him as a long-lost brother and was willing to put money on for him to almost a limitless extent.

On the Sunday the farce of keeping the assumed mug away from the "boys" was adopted by the fly flat, who had credit all round. The late Goffin, one of the most prominent Belgian layers a few years back, was the chief bookmaker, and of course the F. F. did all the commissions.

In the two days—to make the story shorter than it might be—the deficit was thirty-seven thousand francs, and of course it was time for the transatlantic visitor to say "hip-hip" and "off" it. He was going to "see his bankers in London" and return for the Thursday's racing. The bill at the Splendid was paid, and the commissioner saw his client off. Would you believe it, he fell for a French "pony" (five hundred francs) on the deck of the boat? It was a great exit, but the backer might have packed up a parcel with a bit of luck. There was any amount of talk afterwards. Goffin and others went for their money to the commissioner, and I never heard exactly how it ended.

There have been occasions when the bookmakers over there have squealed at a genuine English raid with a good horse, but they have grumblingly paid. An instance of this was a few years back when Ouadi Halfa won a race—after nearly falling down at one stage of it. What a packet was won! There are stories of the real old days at Ostend, turf "yarns" but true, which make one's hair stand on end; and then there is an inevitable feeling of envy that we were not "in it." A certain English animal years ago got a hundred yards' start—this was before Joe Marsh, of course—and how that animal won makes no matter.

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The Ostend Meeting is one of the best conducted anywhere, and the sense of charging only five francs for ladies and two francs for children should be appreciated to the full. It makes a charming rendezvous for a family, and the admirable idea of allowing young boys and girls to be at what is quite a garden-party function is far-seeing.

It was at Ostend that Lord Torrington really began systematic ownership, which led to his having a permanent string of horses in England after a stable in Belgium. A little party of us—Torrington, Nicko Wood, Bertie Hollender and myself—left London one night for Ostend, where we were joined by the late Jack Gouraud from Paris. It was some party. We went to the Royal Palace, attended by one valet only, Nicko's man, whom he hung on to, and the man hung on to Nicko through all sorts of vicissitudes. The way he valeted us all was a revelation. I am afraid that Jack Gouraud had to come to the rescue of the majority of the party before many hours were over, owing to the tables. I didn't play. What a delightful friend he was, Jack Gouraud! I really cried when, at the Waldorf in the early part of 1910, I heard of his death one evening. What memories of days in Paris, at the Café de Paris, the mention of his name brings up! We used to be all merry and bright in those days, and waited on until the "ordinary" people went. Then the real evening would begin, something much more entertaining than anything ever provided in Montmartre.

Jack never hustled himself; he would wave to a waiter to have the piano wheeled round to his table and hardly turn his chair to begin playing and starting the fun. Then everyone would do something. Ethel Levey would sing—this was in 1909 I am speaking of—Belle Ashlyn would do her bit, and Bertie Hollender

“WHAT IS THE USE OF WORRY?”

and Jack Gouraud were indefatigable. It was they who should have received any fee from the management to keep the place alive. They never stopped, and the greatest value I ever knew in Paris was in the Gouraud-Hollender combination days. There will be more to say when alluding to American days. Powers Gouraud was there too, several times, and he and Jack had a trick of verse—perhaps blank—especially Powers, I shall never forget :

“And what is the use of worry?
You get nothing if you think
Of yesterday or to-morrow ;
Take a pipe, dream, or a drink,
You’re dead longer than you’re living.
All sorts of good things you’ll find,
If you live to the limit
And take all there’s in it,
Till you’re crossing the Great Divide.”

There were countless other ditties, including “The Lemon, the Lady, the Lobster,” etc.

But now, it must be Ostend again. All the boys went away and I stayed on with Torrington. The reason of this was that I got bowled over with ptomaine poisoning, and had to miss the Sussex fortnight and other meetings. I tell you it was *some* trouble.

Torrington bought a horse from Mr de Neuter, and afterwards asked me to introduce him to Tod Sloan, who was there at the time. After I left, Tod and Torrington got hold of a few horses and went to Brussels. Later they found Abelard II., who was bought cheap from Mr George Edwardes. About this same Abelard II., who won countless races in Belgium, and has won in England too since his days abroad. I was at the Queen’s Hotel, Southport, for Liverpool, and Mr Edwardes was also there. He invited me to his

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sitting-room on the Friday after the National, but later he had to go in to Liverpool, and I spent an hour or two in his absence with Robert Evett—he of the exquisite pure tenor voice; they were together. George Edwardes told me that evening that he thought he had something to bet on the next day in a race. That was Abelard II. He failed badly, and afterwards, as I have said, found his way through Sloan to Belgium. That was in 1910. “T.,” as his friends call Lord Torrington, did wonders with the horse, and also with others. Abelard II., when winning his last race in Belgium, actually carried eleven stone two pounds and won a race on the flat—a bit of a record, if you think of it.

In the early autumn of that year Abelard was put into the Cambridgeshire, where he only got six to nine. In the meantime his owner had left Belgium for England to take delivery of a big new Itala racing car; he also bought a torpedo-shaped two-seater the same week. There was the important discussion whether Abelard II. could win the Cambridgeshire. Torrington was very anxious that his horse should come over to England and finish his preparations in this country, but there had been a little misunderstanding with Sloan, and I was to go over to Brussels to see if matters could be adjusted, for Torrington had backed his horse to win—well, at least fifty thousand pounds. Prior to going, however, the Leger had to be seen, and a little party of us stayed at Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire, and motored to Doncaster each day. It was a long journey, nearly ninety miles each way, but this was nothing to the fearless motorist. Of course there was only one thing for me to do, to get the work off from the course, for it was doubtful some evenings what time we should get back for dinner. On Leger Day I

RACING TO THE ST LEGER

had an extraordinary experience. "T.," myself, the chauffeur and an extra hand were in the big racing car, and after passing through Lincoln we had a burst tyre. As we were going against time it was an awkward moment, made still more gloomy when the chauffeur confessed to Lord Torrington that he had forgotten the "jack." How was the heavy car to be lifted up and a new tyre put on? By the most singular chance, there was some building going on near by, and within fifty yards there were bricks and heavy balks of timber. It was a work of no time to get a sufficiency of these to raise up the car and begin operations. After helping, I took out my note-book and wrote my article in snatches, describing the incidents of the journey and the doubt whether I should reach the course to see Swynford win the big race. Minute after minute went by, but at last the three of us were speeding along the road. What a race to get there! Any more tyre trouble would have done us in. I believe we left in the wake the police making notes, but at all events we were in time to have a look at the horses in the paddock prior to the great race.

Lemberg I shall always consider a very unlucky horse not to get through and win; he was boxed on the rails, while Swynford always had a clear run, consequently the Derby winner could only get third. Fred Pratt will always think that Bronzino was as unlucky as anything, and that he ought to have won. As it was, he was beaten by only a very narrow margin, and cantered in for the Doncaster Cup on the Friday. I went on to Newmarket on Friday evening, thence to London and Brussels on a short vacation.

I could see when in Brussels that the best thing, in fact the only way of matters being adjusted with regard to the horses, was for the matter to be arranged

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personally between Sloan and the owner. I therefore wired "T." this, and as he had expressed his intention of going to Paris, and Sloan was going there too for the International Week, it was the best thing for them to meet.

I had become closely acquainted that year with Mr Theodore Myers, ex-Controller of New York City, who had a stable of horses with the same trainer as Torrington, Ross Adams. Sloan, of course, was only the adviser, as he had no licence. Motoring to Paris through the lovely valley of the Meuse, and stopping at Namur and Reims, a day or two after our arrival in France, "T." was married. Both Lord and Lady Torrington have pretty well the same tastes, are devoted to racing and each other, and she being possessed of sound common-sense, the family fortunes have certainly not taken a set-back. During the last eighteen months, through the death of the Dowager Lady Torrington, "T." inherited the estate at Yotes Court, near Maidstone, and his racing establishment has been built up from that solitary horse he bought from Mr de Neuter at Ostend.

Mr de Neuter is one of the leading trainers and owners in Belgium and also writes fluently on racing in the most prominent sporting journal published in Brussels. He was always on the look-out for a nice horse and goes to Paris or comes over to England to pick up a bargain. I have a great belief in the future of racing in Belgium. The Belgians are a sport-loving people and each year brings more recruits to owners and amateur riders. It is surprising to find so many men in this country who are only acquainted with Ostend and have never visited such a beautiful course as Groenendael. I have often thought how happy many men I see hanging about town perpetually

“T.’S ” FIRST START

could be with a few horses in training near Brussels. It would give them an object in life and not cost a deal of money; in fact, of all European countries it is far and away the cheapest country for ownership and, as I have said, with bookmakers willing to do business on liberal terms it is possible to make racing pay.

CHAPTER XLVII

THE CALL OF AMERICA

Start for New York—Old Friends on the *Titanic*—Mr Theodore Myers—
First Money made in America—Hopes for Racing—Americans' Promises—New Friends' Kindness—Callous Snobs—Price of Living—My "At Homes"

AFTER the racing season was over in 1910 my health had been pretty bad, and I managed to get leave for two months, to be extended for a time if necessary, and before Christmas I went over to Paris, for a few days, undecided whether to go to Nice and then over to Algiers, or to take a trip to America. As a matter of fact there were no definite plans, but simply the determination to have a thorough ease-up when the opportunity was available. After being in Paris for a few days I decided to go to New York—I had lived so many years without ever seeing America, although I had crowds of friends, and had been on an American newspaper.

So one fine morning there was that wearisome journey from Paris to Cherbourg to catch the *Adriatic*; a more comfortable ship is not afloat. Being the off season I was accommodated royally and made the acquaintance of all those good fellows who were destined eventually to lose their lives on the *Titanic*. Nearly all the *personnel* went to the *Olympic* when she began her runs, and they were afterwards transferred to the *Titanic* on her maiden voyage. Poor Latimer, the chief steward, was very fond of racing, and used to come to my cabin every morning with a bunch of grapes,

MEETING THE U.S. PRESIDENT

and we would talk horse till the cows came home. Then there was poor M'Elroy, the purser, a real good sportsman, and all the others too; there will always be pleasant recollections of each and all of them.

Mr Theodore Myers, of whom I have spoken, was one of the most charming friends a visitor to a strange country could possess. He was at the boat when I arrived, as he had some friends arriving by the same ship. During the whole of my stay for the first few weeks there, before Mr Myers himself went back to Europe, his kindness and hospitality were limitless, and there can never be sufficient appreciation expressed. Mr Myers is respected by everyone, and he has been unanimously chosen for more than one period of office as "Controller." He introduced me right and left, and put me up for clubs, these including the New York Yacht Club, the New York Club, and especially the Democratic Club, of which he was president. It was here that I met many men distinguished in politics, literature and art; foremost of all was Dr Wilson, now President of the United States. Somehow at the time, during odd conversations, I never realised that the man I was talking to was destined to be the head of that mighty country. But looking back I can recall many men who were only an incident at the moment, but were worth closer study.

I always knew that I should like America, and before a month had passed I had looked about to see if there was any possible way of making a living, so that there would be the means to see more of the country and to study the conditions more closely. I have never let the grass grow under my feet, and even the first afternoon I arrived in New York I sent a short news story over to the *New York Times*, which was published, and for which I received a cheque some months after-

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wards. I had always been a regular reader of the *New York Morning Telegraph*, and two weeks after my arrival they published an appreciation of mine of New York food and chefs. Mind you, thanks to the hospitality which had been extended to me, I had eaten of the very best which New York provided, and was thus able to be pretty comprehensive in the story. Reading it many months afterwards I saw no occasion to alter a line of it. The time this came out I had approached the editor of the Sunday supplement of the same paper, and he had agreed to take one or two of my short racing stories. In the meantime I had also made the acquaintance of Mr Lewis, the managing director of the *Morning Telegraph*, and we had various long talks about racing; he had confirmed an order for twelve more stories after the first one or two had appeared. He also outlined an arrangement with me, for I had become wedded to America, that in the event of the race-tracks being reopened in April then he would fix up a permanent job with me to do a real live racing article on independent English lines. With all this prospect in view, and being tired of various English troubles which had been profitless and worrying, I wrote and resigned my position on the *Express*. It was a serious regret, but there was always the satisfaction that I made room for my son, who I have explained I had brought on the staff of the *Express* some years before for general sporting work.

Fortunately or unfortunately the bar was not removed from racing in New York, so, looking about, there was the chance given me of regular contributions to *Town Topics*, and eventually a page to a page and a half a week on that excellent illustrated newspaper, *Town and Country*. I had written for it before,

TOWN AND COUNTRY

when in England, for Mr Ralph Blumenfeld, the editor of the *Express*, was not only the London correspondent, but interested in the paper. The editor when I was there was a real good and live chap, who had formerly been on the *Standard*. I can tell you it was a necessity to make money, for the bank-roll was very depleted, and you can't live on nothing a week in New York ; in fact, despite the hospitality and kindness at first, if I was to continue in the swim there was the compliment to be returned.

Hoping on about the racing coming off I held on, making bread and cheese, and not altogether living the life of a recluse. There was any amount to attract in that gorgeous early spring, with the brilliant sunshine, trips up the Hudson, the shops on Fifth Avenue, the good fellows to meet, occasional joy rides, late hours frequently, and always the look-out for some bright scheme which should change the situation from marking time into affluence. Of course New York can be, like any other city, the hardest place possible to a man up against it, but at the same time, when you know it, there is always the same amount of comfort to be had for a third of the money you pay out when you don't know a place. I have always said the same about Paris : know the ropes and you need not be perpetually dipping down to meet every sort of enormous expense. One of the great charms about America is that, even should you live in a modest hotel or apartment, there is always the luxury of a good private bathroom, which cannot be over-estimated. In France, under modest conditions, there is always the difficulty of bathing.

It was strange that from one big man in the New York newspaper world I had met in Europe, and who was profuse in promises, I received no support at all

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when I made certain original offers with regard to features. Never run away with the idea that the American you meet in Europe who promises you the limit in encouragement and help when you land in his country will make good. Far from it: he will give you the cold and glassy; in fact, quite go back on anything he has ever said in response to extended favours in Europe. Apart from the extreme kindness and delightful amiability of Mr Theodore Myers, and that of his friend, Mr "Ed." Steindler, whom I met two or three times in London, there was not a single big man I had been kind to in Europe who thought it necessary to put himself the slightest bit out of his way to extend even the grip of friendship. "Ed." Steindler was the perfect host, asking people to meet me and "putting me in" right, which is worth everything. His office, his staff and his nephew—his "right hand"—were admirable supporters of his friendliness.

The others who really greeted me were new friends, entirely fresh acquaintances. Joe Rothschild was one of the first I met; he was conducting the band at a French ball—they called it that. His private box was flanked by about two dozen empty champagne bottles—they leave them around to keep tally and to show what a darned good customer there is in that box. Two or three of his friends were equally charming: Gay Schiffer and Gus Ranger—all Jewish people, don't forget, you who mouth about our alleged Christianity.

But of the lot I met in Europe—my! There was one magnate I had seen a lot of in Paris when I was on the *Herald* there. He was knocking down a lot of money, and used to press me to make him my banker if I wanted to: I didn't want to. Then again in vulgar ostentation he used to show some of us how

EMPTY INVITATIONS

much champagne he could buy. From cussedness on those evenings I would ask for beer or Vichy. Several times I have saved him from recklessness and getting into trouble. The reiterated word was: "When you come to New York, see what a friend I will be." Would you believe it, my card and a letter remained unanswered? I could do without him, and evidently he could do without an Englishman when he was back to his cheap money-grubbing and cheating. I tell you it makes one a bit sore.

There was another cheap turn I met in Trouville in 1900. I don't like to speak of it so much because the person had a charming wife. He forced himself on me to ask me about everything. He didn't know anything about the *pari-mutuel*, little about racing and darned little about anything outside his own little world, in which, thanks to his relations and perhaps his wife's money, he had been planted. I instructed him, introduced him, and generally made his stay delightful where he would have been a tourist wandering about in nice clothes and a shining veneer of manner. His *faux pas* were glossed over by his wife's tact. The usual sweet honeyed word was said: "When you come to New York," etc. I left my card at his business place in New York, a lowly factory engaged in making something—lace curtains or boot-laces, it makes no matter. Then someone said to me: "He's a big social man: he won't like you calling at his factory; he's connected with the So-and-so's and the Such-and-such's; leave your card and address at his house at 80th Street, just out of farther Fifth Avenue." Would you credit it?—not a word, although I was living—forgive the snobbishness—at a very reputable hotel and was to be found that week at the millionaires' club, the Metropolitan. "Put not

THE CALL OF AMERICA

thy trust in princes" is what my nurse taught me, and the lavished word cannot be believed as heard by transatlantic hustlers after favours in Europe; but at the same time there can be princely treatment and, what is more, the real grasp of friendship.

When Mr Lewis of the *Telegraph* gave me the order for a series of stories it happened at the moment that the bank-roll was a bit thin. I put it to him therefore, in a short note, that dollars would quicken the thought and enable me to go about town without appearing a piker. Within half-an-hour came a cheque for a useful sum—real money. That's a pal and a white man. I delivered the goods certainly, and had other cheques, and even four months after, when I thought I had received nearly all there was to get, another cheque followed me to Chicago.

Many managers, editors and what not sat in their offices thinking they were "it," and drew big salaries, but would not go out of their way to pay a cent more to their men than would keep the live men from taking another job. Many a good English journalist would have turned up his nose at the paltry salaries paid. I pot-boiled along in New York until going west. But that must be written later.

Men frequently ask me whether life in New York is as dear as it is described to be. It is difficult to answer, in a way, because it so much depends on what is required. I was fortunate for a time in finding some excellent lodgings in a house with not a first-class address, but very central, and wherein was much comfort. A large bedroom with a big double sitting-room and a grand piano were the attraction, but you couldn't get it everywhere. On certain days, when there was a lot of work to do, I could get my early breakfast, a meal from the *delicatessen* shop: cold

SUNDAY AFTERNOONS

corned beef and potato salad ; and there was the evening out. Good lager was obtainable in bottle at a dollar for two dozen, or if one "rushed the growler"—sent out a big can or jug—it would be filled at the local bar for ten cents (fivepence). The quantity sent appeared limitless, and all according to the vessel sent—it would always be *filled* for the price—ranging from a bedroom jug to a neat glass carafe.

On Sundays in these rooms I gave little at-homes. Fifty cents' worth of flowers, a jar of rye whisky at a dollar a quart, ice-cold bottled lager, and tea with cakes, attracted many of those I knew, both boys and girls. They would arrive and would amuse themselves. Emerson Foote, Billy Jefferson, Philip Potter, Bertie Hollender, all could do something, and the black "maid" would sit outside on the staircase, swaying about in delight.

The pleasantest place in the evening I found to be the Madrid, run then by George Rector. It was a great thing to go into a restaurant—or café—where there was always a certainty of meeting a few boys and girls who were known. So long as the "bank" hung out, so long there was cheer. George Rector was a cheery soul, and helped the conviviality until he went over to manage the glorified and rebuilt Rector's on the other side of Broadway. The other places I didn't find a bit amusing. Louis Martin's had succeeded the garish Café de l'Opera which Pruger, late of the Savoy, and now of the Automobile Club, had gone out to manage. Evening clothes had been insisted on for men—failure foredoomed, because men in America will not be bound by convention, and it wasn't Pruger's fault. There were nice men who would not go the distance to change their clothes, but would give their people in gorgeous raiment the best possible.

THE CALL OF AMERICA

But what wine! It wasn't exactly bad, but so meaningless; there was no character about it, yet we used to pay five dollars a bottle (one pound), and lap it without the inspiration there is from *real* wine. The new-comer to a table where others were gathered needed no apology; he simply sat down and paid for the next bottle of the "round." That is where America differs so: the man who comes uninvited in England may be a supper snatcher; in America he installs himself as the host for the moment.

CHAPTER XLVIII

NEW YORK TO CHICAGO

Gambling *de Luxe*—The Bath Luxury—Down the Harbour—Racing missed—Arrival of Lord Queensberry—Our Journalistic Partnership—Trying Me Out

THE runners of the various gambling clubs were frequently in the offing, and sometimes they “copped” a mug, but occasionally found a “lifter”—*i.e.* a man with wonderful luck. All those I went to were straight. They would put the electric light up for one punter and open the safe to give him his notes if he won, or hand him a certain number of chips if he wanted them. It was too extraordinary. One afternoon I was with a very young man who had lost a hundred dollars (twenty pounds) playing Pinochle, and in a café I had lost a bit, too, backing him. He said that he must get it back, and we went next door, to where a “wheel game” (roulette) could be had. All the place was illuminated in a moment; the best drink and cigars brought out, and the punting started. I left it to the boy. In five minutes he had won seven hundred dollars (one hundred and forty pounds), and he stopped. Honour was satisfied and he left off at the right moment; we both went home gay. But imagine it, you who run systems at Monte Carlo and elsewhere, staying in the rooms for hours together. Picture just a quick five minutes with a perfect installation for one punter—who brought it off!

Raids there were innumerable, but the singular

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part of it was that, where I was taken by knowledgeable men, there were no heart tremors at all; the proprietors of certain places were so sure. How it was done, frankly, I don't know; yet there was scarcely a week but we who went round town saw the patrol wagon waiting, and the smashed fit-outs, in the way of "wheels" and other gaming plant, brought out of their front door and piled anyhow into a waiting vehicle.

But oh, that summer in New York! After revelling in the spring, there were moments of premonition that what was awaiting me might be equal to or exceed parts of Australia. And so it did. Can you imagine going to bed with a wild thunderstorm playing about the roofs, then the fitful gusts which presaged another. A heavily charged atmosphere and then a boiling day. A morning jaunt on a bit of delicate finance and then a return after an hour, and the necessity of a cold bath and a complete change. The tall buildings attracted the heat; the side-walks (pavements) were red hot. There was no permanent comfort in the extended alleged cooling drink; there was the temporary gratification of absorption, but no benefit. The cold drink only aggravated the desire for the tub, and God bless you in America for popularising the bath! You have made it the necessity, and taught a big lesson in hygiene to other countries, which they are all too slow to follow. The luxury of the private bathroom can be best appreciated where it cannot be obtained—in many of the otherwise luxurious private houses of Europe. Fifty years hence possibly, perhaps twenty, but how slow! As I have said, in the smallest hotels there is the private bath.

The routine of the terrific summer in New York was: trips down the harbour; heavy meals in prohibition

MISSING RACING

townships and villages, where perforce it was tea, coffee, iced sweetness or nothing. It is a question of local option with a vengeance; you can die of alcoholic poisoning in some places if necessary, and on the other side of the harbour at Atlantic Highlands, for instance, it is to hell with the sportsman who is faint. Did I go to Coney Island? Oh yes. The scum off the sea could have been skimmed by a sewage farmer and the air oxygenised with advantage to those who were breathing the atmosphere of hot "dogs" (Frankfurter sausages) and kraut. Such fare for summer, with the thermometer at 95° in the shade—or over. I hope this doesn't sound as being disgruntled with New York; on the contrary, it was more attractive than London might be in the dog days to the stranger from without. If I were writing this book on America it would be necessary to dissect, and in this express appreciation after appreciation of American life and character. I love the country and have many times since leaving felt the call of it.

How a day's racing was missed! In the winter I had gone out on several occasions to see the various race-tracks, and enjoyed the hospitality of one or two of those good fellows connected with the sport who were waiting patiently for the law to be altered. They galloped their horses and took a Mark Tapley view of the future. I had a view of the various lots out at Belmont Park, admired the two-year-olds, with the inevitable idea that they might be destined not to run until they were four-year-olds, all waiting for the "Law" to take its course. Think of it, some of you who complain on a Monday when there is no sport, or become perfectly miserable when a fog or frost sets in during November or December. To get racing partially reinstated has been a very big fight, and there is

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any amount of thankfulness that there is half-a-loaf at all events round about New York. It takes the boys away from the bars in the afternoon, and generally clears the air, and gives them something to talk about and get sleepy over, thus avoiding the eternal dodging about town which can so frequently lead—to nothing.

At the beginning of August, on a Sunday, I read in the *Herald* a long interview with the Marquis of Queensberry. Apparently it was the Associated Press which had sent the story over, for it got into nearly all the papers. The interview had taken place at Euston Station, as he had left there the previous day for Liverpool and New York. Having known Lord Queensberry and his family for many years, I approached one or two papers, and was able to give some interesting particulars of his career. On the following Thursday evening I went down to the pier to meet the ship, and presently "Q." walked ashore. He was glad to see me, arriving by himself, and I suppose feeling rather lonely. I felt the same pleasure at greeting an old friend. Then he told me the story, that the *Herald* had sent a wireless to him on the journey that they would fix up with him to come on their staff; in fact, we expected that there would be a representative on the wharf, but he was looked for in vain. Presently, however, "Q." was approached by a little man who had come from that important western paper, the *Chicago Tribune*, to fix up matters for Queensberry to go on the staff of their paper. After a short talk an appointment was made at the Waldorf Astoria for the next morning.

It was after midnight and we had not much time for discussing it, but the possibilities seemed favourable. Queensberry had intended to go straight away from

THE "Q." PARTNERSHIP

New York to Canada to look after some mining interests in the Porcupine, but the allurements of a certainty was to be thought over. He knew my capacity as a journalist, and of course he was alive to the fact that he knew nothing about it. Another thing was that there had been the suggestion made by the assistant editor of the Chicago paper that the principal line they wanted him for was sport. "Q." asked me whether it was possible, in the event of fixing it up, for me to go at once to Chicago with him, but the settlement of this was left to the next day, when I was to do the arranging about the business part of it, and see what could be fixed for myself in addition to the partnership arrangement over the work as between Queensberry and myself. The next day, arriving at the Waldorf a little after ten o'clock, I found "Q.'s" bedroom full of journalists interviewing him as to incidents of his journey, getting an outline of his intentions, and his opinion on various matters. They seemed to cotton to the democratic peer, who was sitting up in bed smoking a big cigar, and similar weeds had been supplied to the dozen or so in the room.

Never had a visiting Englishman a better send-off. The Press gave him a great welcome, especially as he signified that there was a possibility of his taking out in due course naturalisation papers and getting his family out to settle in the new world. Pictures of himself, the history of his family, with many old portraits, appeared that day, and in the special Sunday supplements. When the crowd of various young men had gone there came the important business of fixing up the arrangement with the *Tribune* man. Various points were discussed, and at last a basis was found for an agreement which was roughly drawn up. But

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before signing it "Q." wanted my firm answer whether I would go with him. It wanted considering, for I was beginning to augment a steady income in New York with the various papers I have spoken about in a previous chapter; in fact, I was due to go off to Newport for the big tennis tournament two days afterwards. Nevertheless, there was the prospect of seeing Chicago and gaining more insight into American life; terms were fixed all round. On the Saturday, thirty-six hours after his arrival, the whole thing was ratified. With true American spirit the first assignment was fixed up for that afternoon. The *Tribune* had a working arrangement with an evening paper in New York, and the temporary working was to be that the articles were to be published by the two papers as simultaneously as possible, considering the times each went to press. It did the thing very well, this New York paper: a big automobile was always at our disposition, with two members of the sporting staff of the evening paper.

The first idea, I think, had been that, in view of Queensberry's inexperience in writing, he should give his ideas, and these could be worked up by one of the sporting sub-editors, but it was obvious to his intelligence that he would be saying things in the paper not at all his own diction, whereas by me doing it it would be in regular English style. Not only that, but I had known him well, and always had the trick of putting myself in another's place, using phrases, etc., which were customary to the man who was supposed to be speaking.

The first afternoon we went out to Papke's training quarters. Papke was to fight "Sailor" Burke the following week. Before five o'clock I had turned out a column of what was happening in Papke's camp; it

A STORY AGAINST TIME

was a good start, for the stuff was bright and workman-like. The same thing occurred on Sunday, when we went to see Burke. The following week there were various assignments, special big-letter announcements, and the thanks for his warm welcome he wrote himself. There were two fights to attend, the first of which was the Papke-Burke contest.

The sporting editor of the New York paper told me that the fight would very likely not be over till nearly eleven, and could I get a column and a half for them by midnight to put on the wires to Chicago so that it would get in the paper the next morning? I think they were trying me out a bit to see whether the goods could be delivered. All I asked for was a smart typist up at this big club, so that when the bout was over we could go to work. It finished at eleven o'clock. By five minutes past eleven the hall was cleared, the smart youth with the typewriter got into his chair, and I went ahead. There were two other journalists waiting about and three or four curious lookers-on. There was no hesitancy. It was a fight that one could be lightly bantering about, but still an opinion had to be given, for by the state law no decisions are announced at the ring-side, bets following the dictum of certain newspapers. This had to be incorporated. Before ten minutes to twelve, at full steam, the two thousand words were finished and corrected. I have always been a quick worker, but that evening, just when I wanted to, went the limit. Great praise, however, must be given to the New York typist, who was one of the quickest operators I have ever struck. Not only that, but he did not pose, like some of the others, that he did not catch my English phrases properly. I suppose it is swank to repeat this capable journalistic experience, but it will always be a favourable recollec-

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tion how those lookers-on were impressed, not only with the story, but with the way it had been done. Various other matters were taken up that week, and after eight days we were bound west to take up the duties in Chicago.

CHAPTER XLIX

ON THE *TRIBUNE*

Meeting with Hackenschmidt—The Match with Gotch—Working up the Excitement—Odd Newspaper Stunts—Chicago Life—Starting the *Fan*—Threats to the Editor—"Q." resigns—Samuel Insull—Department Stores

FIRST impressions of Chicago were agreeable. Michigan Avenue, facing the vast lake or sea, reminded me one minute of Brighton and the next of Southport. It was so difficult to realise that that enormous expanse of water was fresh, especially when a seven or eight thousand ton steamship was seen entering the port. Those strings of great lakes are most magnificent. It was a Sunday evening in August, and everyone was out in their best. Michigan Avenue, with its beautiful hotels and shops, was interesting, but get away from the front, and the various other avenues with the street cars and elevated railway made a hideous noise, recalling Glasgow-cum-Liverpool intensified.

The first big stunt we were put on to was the Gotch and Hackenschmidt match, which was due to take place about three weeks afterwards. The first few days were spent visiting Hackenschmidt's camp, about three miles out of the town. Hackenschmidt had been an old friend of mine ; I had seen a lot of him in London. He gave me a good welcome, and of course we were introduced to all those who were with him, including that delightful fellow, Dr Roller. Jack Curley was managing the whole show, and by the way

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the tickets were being sold there was a prospect of a gate for a wrestling match which had never been achieved in any part of the world. "Hack" looked well, but on the second or third day I saw him he said to me that after the match he would tell me, as an old friend, something which he did not feel at liberty to do at that particular moment. I had some idea that his knee, which had troubled him before, was not as it should be. The crowd of newspaper men from all parts was an education; in fact, it was to be the biggest sporting fixture for years. It must be understood that neither boxing nor racing were allowed in the state of Illinois, so that there was a limitation to excitement in the way of sport. The columns and columns which were turned out to work up enthusiasm promised that the affair was bound to be a great one. In the meantime Queensberry was making friends, and was fêted here and there, photographed by himself and in groups, and the *Tribune* was syndicating everything bearing the signature of Queensberry all over the United States; in fact, they were making a lot of money out of him.

The head of the *Tribune* was Mr Keeley, about whom there was the romance that he was an Englishman born and had sprung from a very lowly position into that of one of the greatest editors in America, at an enormous salary. As the day of the big match drew nearer there were different rumours, and when I saw "Hack" two days before it he emphasised that he had something really important to tell me when all was over. The fact of it is that he really was not fit to go on with the match, but the sum at stake was so stupendous that there were inducements of every description offered him to take the chance, and Hackenschmidt did not want to let Jack Curley down. I saw Gotch the day before

£20,000 WRESTLING GATE

the match, and was struck with him, just as some of us can go into a paddock and pick out a horse who by his appearance looks unbeatable. It was then that I would not put a shilling on "Hack." In fact, twenty-four hours before the event some self-constituted authority, I think the referee, declared all bets off, but by this time Jack Curley had sold over twenty thousand pounds' worth of tickets. The match was to take place in the open air at a baseball ground. Fancy bets being declared off! It was the most impudent thing to imagine, but winners and losers took it like lambs—although I wrote dead against it.

There could not have been a better day for the match, which began about three-thirty and was finished in twenty minutes. "Hack" never made any show at all, and from the very moment the men got to grips it was any odds on one; it could be plainly seen in the face of Mrs Gotch, who was sitting near me. "Hack" told me the next day that he had not wished to go into the ring; in fact, had offered a forfeit to go, but they wouldn't let him. That's what he had to tell me. Yet I shall always think Gotch a real good man. Hackenschmidt went two days after. He has made plenty of money to live on, so why should he bother about it again?

After all the excitement it was a meaningless business, and showed what an absurdity it was to suppress other sports which had some real significance. This all made Chicago a dull place during the day. We had work to do, which relieved the monotony, and in the evening there was little trouble to fill in every hour. The theatres were good and comfortable, nearly all the best shows from New York coming west. Then there were also picture shows and perpetual vaudeville (music hall) in the ten-cent show. Some

of them were really very funny, the Jewish comedians in particular, and the shows paid into the bargain. I have put up the idea since to many men in England, but they could not see them paying in London. Well, if they wouldn't pay there they wouldn't anywhere else in England, that's a pretty sure thing.

On we went; Queensberry had to go on his own to one or two neighbouring towns; then he went to see the finals for the baseball, while I occupied my time in taking an office and interesting myself in organising one or two syndicates. One was to exploit a newspaper, the name of which Queensberry and I agreed should be the *Fan*. It was a significant title, apart from suggesting the sporting expression "Fan," which means "Fanatics" after any particular game. The other show was to be the sale of a property on an island in Canada, which was to be an enormous sporting club estate called the "Queensberry Club." Queensberry went to England for Christmas, and in January the first number of the *Fan* appeared. It was an unpretentious but bright little sheet, and if it pleased the men who set it up and made it up at our printers there must have been something in it. It was entirely a break-away, however, from what Chicago had expected, and was not received with much enthusiasm.

Then came the trouble. The Post Office authorities, on whom one is so much dependent for mailing a paper everywhere, were displeased at certain paragraphs, describing them as "unfit for publication." It was in vain that I protested that these paragraphs had already appeared in my paper, the *Sport Set*, and had been sold by all the reputable wholesale newsagents of the United Kingdom, for I confess that although there was original matter, and plenty of it, in the little

LIABLE TO "INCARCERATION"

paper, a few good plums which had not appeared in America but had in England were put in.

After the second issue I had a letter from the Deputy-Assistant-Attorney-General, or some official of a similar title, saying that I was liable to a fine of one thousand dollars and six months in the penitentiary. That put the lid on it, so the publication stopped. In the meantime Queensberry had decided to give up his job on the *Tribune*, in which I shall always think that he made a great mistake, for six months more of his agreement had yet to run, and there was no chance of getting out of it on the part of the proprietors of the *Tribune*. Of course it meant a serious loss to me, for apart from the partnership arrangement, which was not working altogether successfully, there was some Sunday stuff I was doing on old-time fighters in Queensberry's name which was with other things bringing in a living. At all events he left.

In the meantime a syndicate in Chicago had put up a good deposit for the island club in Canada, and it came about that the idea was formed of me seeing the principal men in Toronto and Montreal with the view of possible membership and taking a financial interest in the scheme. I therefore moved on to Toronto, only to find that the vendor had not made good his title, and was not likely to for a long time to come. I went to Montreal to see the prospects there, but hearing again that the completion of the deal was in the dim future I determined, after being away from Europe now for nearly eighteen months, it was no use hanging about and I had better come home; which I did.

Of all the men I met in Chicago there will always be a grateful recollection of Mr Samuel Insull, an Englishman, who has accumulated an enormous fortune and

is head of the Edison Company and many other enterprises. He was associated with Mr Edison personally for many years. Mr Insull has been known to give the glad hand to many a visiting Englishman, and this accompanied by encouragement. He certainly was the best of friends to me, and entirely approved when I eventually told him of my determination to come back to where I was sure work awaited me. Mind you, I shall never think that I was a failure in America, for I made a living both in New York and Chicago; and it would have been a handsome living had the conditions been modified with regard to racing and the sport allowed on a limited scale as it is to-day. There was the opening in commerce too, but when a man is wedded to the newspaper business it is very difficult to break away from it. It is very much like the actor, who does not care to leave the stage.

The restaurant life in Chicago was quite amusing, with good orchestras, and the food good although expensive. There is plenty of hospitality extended, too. I had to get into the habit of street cars, for the taxis were dearer even than in New York. What do you think of four people going about as far as from the Gaiety Theatre to the Piccadilly and having to pay seven shillings; in fact, it was difficult to get into one at all and go any little distance without a six-shilling fare. Another peculiarity was that they could only be taken from their stand, where they could be checked out and home. A passing taxi wouldn't stop for you at any price; rather barbarous, don't you think so?

The great department stores were always an attraction, for all the big windows are lit up after closing time, and not only did this render the streets lighter and brighter, but there was something to look at. The underworld of the place was about the darkest

HANGING FOUR OF THEM

imaginable, crime and infamy running riot. Street murders were common, and as a rule the punishment was totally inadequate. During the time I was there, however, five men were hanged one morning—four of them for participation in one murder, that of a man coming into town with his market cart. I knew the judge who sentenced them, and he told me that the most strenuous efforts were being made to get them off, but on his part he was going to fight to the finish to see that they did not get reprieved. Although there were postponements, in the end the law took its course. It was calculated to have a deterrent effect; whether it has had I do not know; this happened three years ago. Of course, Chicago is the dumping ground, especially in the winter, for thousands of every nationality. The majority of these clear out in the summer to work on the various farms in the west, but can do a lot of mischief while they remain.

I have spoken about the department stores. That of Marshall Field, in State Street, Chicago, is an object lesson to the dry goods houses of the world. They employ nearly eight thousand hands: five thousand in their retail place and the remainder in their wholesale warehouse, despatching, etc. Their wholesale business covers practically the whole of the United States. Another firm does a turn-over of millions of pounds a year and never shows anything. The big store is on the outskirts of the city and entirely a mail-order business, the firm employing nearly three thousand hands. All the business is found through posted catalogues, and the response from everywhere is stupendous. Whether the same thing would be possible in this country has never been properly tried.

I never visited a gambling house, but there was a mild game played in nearly every bar and cigar store,

ON THE *TRIBUNE*

throwing dice against the house. If you won there was handed over a disc representing value in money, for entertainment, cigars or cigarettes. That was one of the contradictions about the law there: they were allowing this general form of cheap gambling, yet they closed the racecourses and wouldn't allow a boxing match. There was also a threat to stop wrestling after one or two poor exhibitions had been given; no one would have missed that. Yet all the men met about town were such good sportsmen themselves. They loved sport, were open-handed in hospitality, welcomed visitors and read everything there was about the boxing taking place in other states, and appreciated anyone who could talk on the topic. Jack Johnson had not taken his big bar when I was there, but had just been matched with Flynn—another of Jack Curley's enterprising moves.

When I was there they were trying to boom Association football, and it may progress, but the process was slow. The Corinthians visited the city and played three games. I told Wreford Brown and others I had known in England what great missionary work they were doing, and if they could only go more frequently the march of the game might be quicker.

CHAPTER L

HOMEWARD BOUND

Toronto and Montreal—London Once More—Thrill from Racing News—*Evening Standard* again—"The Judge"—Trying to lift the *Jockey*—The "Ticker" Reader—Mr Davidson Dalziel—Mr Bottomley's Advice—The Sense of Humour—Trouble to Affluence—Night Clubs

IT is no use giving an "appreciation" of Canada—I didn't see it properly—but at all events I can say what I thought of Toronto and Montreal. I disliked the former city as much as I liked the French-Canadian city. Toronto spells holiness, "bum" (American sense) respectability and cheap mining deals. They close the bars at seven o'clock on Saturday night and, generally, envelop themselves in sanctity or cheap gentility. The whole of Toronto reeks of keeping people good on old Covenanter and American-evangelical lines. Impressions can be wrong, but there seems an asceticism and "fear of fun" idea which certainly oppresses the visitor. There are nice people everywhere, and there was no lack of good words, but no regret on my part at leaving it.

Montreal is so different. Seventy per cent. speak French; they have that and their ancient faith which they cling to. There is a picturesqueness about Montreal, too, which is so refreshing—the sleighs, with big buffalo rugs for those riding, and the musical jingle of the bells. Now Montreal has its Ritz Hotel, which will give a distinction to the city and enable certain of the light-hearted residents there to amuse themselves. Racing is progressing, and at

HOMeward BOUND

Montreal they have the *pari-mutuel* on an old charter which cannot be revoked. The food is of the best too, and the picturesqueness of the Place Viger Hotel, looking as it does over a large open space, reminded me of the romances read about Canada. That wonderful air too—I had the experience which I understand others have had: being surcharged with electricity. If I touched a radiator a spark would fly out from the tip of my finger-nail, and of course it was the same in touching other metals. Presumably it all meant full health; at all events, there was the keen appreciation for everything which Montreal had to offer. Although there only a few days there were many introductions, and it was with regret that the train was taken for a thirty-four-hours' journey to Halifax, Nova Scotia, to get a homeward-bounder. The *Royal George* is a very well-found ship; in fact, this line from Avonmouth to Canada is most reposeful in the off season. The *Royal George* and the *Royal Edward* were originally in the Mediterranean service, but are now proud possessions of the Canadian Northern Railway.

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London did not look quite at its best on an Easter Monday, and everything appeared rather puny after the enormous structures of the western world. But what a delight to get hold of an evening paper and read the probable starters for the Queen's Prize! Fancy not having seen a horse running in colours for eighteen months! It sent a thrill through me, the bare suggestion of it, and trouble was taken to read up books of form to get in touch with what I had missed during my absence. I had, however, read assiduously everything which had taken place, and how interesting it was to notice that certain horses about whom a high opinion had been held had proved themselves as

MR DAVIDSON DALZIEL

I had fondly hoped they would. Before a week was over I found myself having a little bit each way and going to the meetings.

The question was getting into harness again, and I approached one of my old papers, the *Evening Standard*, and was appointed straight away. It was thought better by Mr Davidson Dalziel and Mr Kilpatrick, the editor, that some new *nom de plume* would be advantageous, so "The Judge" was the happy thought. It was agreeable to get among old confrères of the Press, and to be greeted by old friends both on and off a racecourse. There were some early successes with regard to tipping, a part of the work I had been a little nervous about on account of my prolonged absence.

Mr Dalziel, whom I had known only by name, had taken over the controlling interest of the *Standard* during my absence. He is one of those men from whom one word of appreciation is a spur to distinctive effort; truly a man who knows men. I have to thank Mr Ralph Blumenfeld of the *Express* for putting in the glad word that I had helped make the *Express*, etc. Mr E. H. Johnstone, too, whom I had been with on the *Express* and *Standard* for many years, was also a director of the *Standard*, and his kindly interest has also to be marked by a most remembering word.

There was no intention of entirely binding me to the *Evening Standard*, although, of course, other daily paper work could not be considered. I therefore took over for a time that old-fashioned paper, the *Jockey*, which had come down to a pretty low ebb. It was a hard fight, for capital had been exhausted; but I think it can be admitted by all those who know the trade that it was made again into

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a readable sheet, and certainly the circulation was doubled. I gave it up in 1913, after twelve months' run, as its overwhelming old creditors made it necessary for the debenture holder to put in a Receiver. I only mention this as an incident, but it was a pleasant time with those I was associated with, especially my assistant, Charles Cornish, who deserves a big position on the London sporting Press on account of his knowledge and great personal attributes. At one time he had been possessed of chunks of money and property, but speculations in licensed houses beat him. It is delightful to meet any worker in the fields of journalism of whose loyalty there is no possible doubt whatever. I only trust that some day it will be my good fortune to control a great journalistic enterprise wherein Charles Cornish can have his private room, private telephone, and a place for depositing those enormous account-books filled with the calculations on various systems of his own covering many years. They are his office gods, these precious books, and I was interested to find that many pages were devoted to the selections I had given for many years when "The Scout."

In the office, too, was a good little chap, Clifton, who had the peculiar faculty of sitting in the next room to me doing his work and reading the first, second and third in a race from the ticking of the tape which was a good distance away. Several times when I had put a little extra on a horse I would look from my desk across to the other room when the fateful ticking began, and I would watch his face. Of course he knew what I had backed, and in a second his tell-tale features would give the indication. His face would either light up or assume a look of despondency. In the former case there could be a little entertainment



THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY EXPRESS"

The paper on which the author was "The Scout" for so many years



THE STANDARD

for the staff ; in the latter the only thing to do was to shut the door and slog in to work. They were all pleasant to work with even in ups and downs, and I shall always hope that the good sportsman who holds or held the debentures will get his money back and eventually make it pay.

Amid all the incidents on the return to England was the joy of racing work on the paper I had been connected with for so many years—in fact, over eleven now (I am writing in the spring of 1914). Formerly it was six days, then once a week, then twice and afterwards three times a week. It became in 1911 the daily story again—on racing. The *Evening Standard* to me has always represented the solid evening authority ; there was in quite early days the real idea that it was the evening planet of finality to the day's doings, in politics, sport and—the world. In no other country is there the same equivalent. Other evening papers rise up ; are active in many respects, ably run and interesting, but the real racing man is, as I have said, a lover of tradition, and, whatever the other changes may be, his racing results must be—as he has had them since he began to read racing. Mr Davidson Dalziel has had experience of more than one country and enterprise. Dominant ideas of business, combined with administrative capacity and politics, ensure for his papers a permanency of conviction to an enormous public.

There were one or two ideas after returning to England of starting another weekly paper if sufficient backing could be obtained, but I remembered, fortunately, the little lecture of Mr Bottomley one day at luncheon, that he was so surprised that an otherwise reasonable man like myself, with an assured income, should want to do something for nothing—*i.e.* sweat

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blood in a proprietorial capacity for "nowt." That idea will always act as a deterrent, and is not the only good bit of advice that the ruling factor of *John Bull* has given. He has the capacity for gauging every situation and taking a super-intelligent view of his own. In another way, too, he is an object lesson to many men who want lifting out of despond. He is a supreme optimist, and has been saved in all his darkest moments by a natural buoyancy of disposition and sense of humour—heaven-sent endowments both. I can claim to have enjoyed, perhaps in a lesser sense, both attributes, and the possession makes it possible to shake off evil dreams, have a gay air in opening the curtains in the morning, and fancying there is a gleam of sunshine trying to pierce any old mass of black clouds. I have been up against it so many times that I suppose real reposeful affluence might make me a dull fellow.

In this thought I am always reminded of a chap many of us knew about town a few years back. He did not go racing always, but Epsom, Ascot and the Parks usually were visited; he backed horses regularly, however. It would be a struggle; he would get a limited overdraft; maintain a "float" of cheques; touch a bit, and generally was on the financial collar—always uphill.

One day he came in for money—a thousand down and thirty pounds a week for life. It was stipulated that he was never to go racing nor back a horse. There was no power of anticipation, and if he conformed to the conditions laid down, and the trustees were satisfied that he had, he could touch five thousand pounds ready—apart from his annuity—after five years.

He was very happy until the first Sunday. Under other conditions it used to be his day of days: no post, no duns, no bells ringing, no banks open—all

DAMPED BY "DOUGH"

peace. As luck would have it, too, that Sunday was succeeded by a Bank Holiday. How in former times he would have revelled in the peaceful bliss of two days immune from the close finance with cheques and what not! Instead of which he jingled sovereigns in his pocket, looked at his odd bits of "bijouterie"—all on him; regarded his new cheque-book, and could not think of anyone to draw a cheque for, and—wanted no ready! It was meaningless to go to the Savoy and *pay*; by pulling out the gold it seemed extravagant. Then at Romano's in the evening he did not have the same pleasure in looking round to see who was there; he wanted no information about horses, for he was not allowed to bet. There was no need to join another man's table to put heads together to know where they could possibly get a hundred till the weather broke. The chink of the sovereigns and the rustle of the ten-pound notes when he pulled out his pocket-book to find a newspaper cutting were to an extent an irritant. Curiously, his intimate friends had not yet learnt of his luck. Romano's account had been paid, and it seemed ridiculous to hand back the ready pencil which was handed to him to sign his bill. Luigi is a man never to be astonished at anything; he misses nothing, he must have put it down to a temporary success—or eccentricity. On the Monday he cursed himself that he hadn't gone away somewhere. He could not go to the races, and it all appeared so empty. There is no need to prolong it; he became quite misanthropic, until one day someone with a dominating personality took a fancy to him and told him she was determined to marry him. I can suppose that it saved his reason.

In looking round London after an absence it was surprising to see the growth of the Bohemian night

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life ; it was all such a change. At one time if the party had to be prolonged after being turned out of a restaurant at half-past twelve, there was only one of two things to do : go to a club with men only, or accept an extended invitation to a house or flat where it didn't matter if the piano was played till cockcrow. In some professions it doesn't matter much getting up at nine o'clock in the morning, and that is one great advantage of the newspaper business. When you are on morning-paper work there are the accustomed late hours, and on an evening paper, so long as latest intelligence is provided by boy messenger, telegraph or telephone for the first edition, active touch is kept. I always pitied some of my friends who had either to be in their office at nine o'clock, had to be in wig and gown at the Law Courts at ten o'clock, or keep an early appointment on a matter of moment. To them bed should be a very sweet place, but there is a fascination about the small hours. In my case it was engendered by working for many years at night and acquiring the supper habit as opposed to dinner. I have always been a big trencherman after eleven o'clock at night. There are many who talk of the hopelessness of going to roost after a big meal, but doesn't a dog stretch himself out after his main repast, and doesn't a snake go to sleep for a week after he is gorged ? The small clubs for those Bohemians who sit up have been the object of attack at the time this chapter is written. How it will end doesn't make so much matter, but so long as the grandmotherly business exists of driving people into the street less than an hour after some of the theatres close, so will the attempt be made to evade the law. Certainly the small clubs which I found existed were attractive to the many foreign visitors who managed to get the entrée.

CHAPTER LI

OLD THEATRICAL FRIENDS

Comfort of English Theatres—Gerald Du Maurier's Shoes—Arthur Playfair wanted a House—Marsh Allen—Turf and Stage—George Graves—The Prestons—Gambling Houses in London

THE theatres seemed so much more comfortable after America, and the fact of them having a licence was so refreshing. It did not mean having to go out in the snow or rain or blast to get a drink. Drink is like tobacco; if you have a pocketful of cigarettes and a big cellar you may read the paper without smoking and drink Apollinaris, but once being without things hitherto accustomed to creates a craving. It was so gladdening, too, in the theatres to see everyone in the stalls, boxes and dress circle make the theatre a function and refresh themselves by that very hygienic idea of changing raiment.

Several of my old friends I found marching forward. Gerald Du Maurier had gone into management and established himself in the position which I always knew he would attain. Success has followed him artistically and financially, and all the time most deservedly. He will never get into a groove, and has a discrimination about plays and casting them which is so happy. His triumph is that he is always the same Du Maurier in face and figure, only moulding himself to the character he has to play. There is a little attention to detail also which shows careful thought. In *Jelfs* he was supposed to come from some never-never country, and therefore wore the

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ultra-shape of American boots, and clothes not of super-excellent cut. Incidentally, two of his nephews who are at a prominent public school took great exception, bless them! to their uncle wearing brown boots with a blue suit. I will not attempt to analyse this debatable question, although at one time I wrote columns in *M.A.P.*, with the title "Mainly For Men," part of which was to tell them what to order and how to put their clothes on. An honour for Du Maurier some day; it seems inevitable after Cyril Maude.

Then there was excellent Arthur Playfair, one of the cleverest actors on the stage. His wedding was assisted at, and unstinted applause given the same evening to that wonderful performance in *The Girl in the Taxi*. Arthur is a great character, most emphatic about racing, but very seldom talks of his work. When that noble son of his was born, it became necessary to look about for a house, where previously the flat in Piccadilly Chambers had been sufficient. The right property was found at St John's Wood, and, would you believe it, despite the highest references, and everything in order financially and otherwise, the agent expressed with many apologies that the landlord would not let the house to an actor! And this for a property in a district the name of which we did not dare to mention when I was a boy before our mothers and maiden aunts. Why, even Arthur Roberts used to sing a song about "Naughty North Bank." Of course, St John's Wood has since been purged, but how in the name of everything there can be anyone alive to regard any respectable member of the profession as "undesirable" beats everything. St John's Would!—*anything* once.

The first glad hand and the first bottle opened on my return was by Harry Marsh Allen at "The Turret,"

SUNSTAR FORECAST

as he calls it—the top flat in Piccadilly Chambers. I tell you it seemed to make a real home-coming when the telephone brought Frank Curzon round, and I heard all about their joys and sorrows the previous year over Sunstar. By the way, in writing an article on the prospects of the English Derby in February, 1911, for a New York paper I gave Pietri as the best on public form, but said there was a wonderfully good colt, an outsider, Sunstar, who might create a surprise. I sent Mr J. B. Joel a copy of the paper: what a prognostic!

Marsh Allen was playing in *The Glad Eye*, with Lawrence Grossmith, and both were getting home. I should like to see both of them in melodrama; believe me, I am right. Marsh's marriage to that talented Anglo-Italian little lady, Miss Marie Bazzi, was another function I assisted at. I have got out of dramatic criticism except with that work on the *Jockey*. New young men have come to the front; Edmund Gwenn is one I have a very high opinion of as a character actor. His is real cleverness as opposed to drawling or eyeglass parts, which one is apt to get a little tired of.

There is a curious affinity between the stage and the turf, and this can be noticed either at the play or on a race-track, but it is a little tiresome to see a racing man singled out for some special attention from the stage; it's too music-hally. The only man who can do it without interfering with the run of the jokes is Graves.

George Graves I found the same as ever. I was with him on that Boxing Day afternoon on which he was due, in 1909, to make his first appearance at Drury Lane. He was not anticipating it with the fullest glee. He was seeking distraction, and he and Lindo—Arthur Collins' right hand in many things—came

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round to my office in Essex Street to have a demonstration of a race game which I had on view. It was George's delight. After that evening at Drury Lane George Graves was nearly giving up pantomime, but he didn't, and year after year goes on, he being the great star and in congenial company. One cheque for a week's pay I have seen—four hundred and twelve pounds.

Whether he is at Brighton, in his dressing-room, or on a racecourse, he is always the same. A bubbling-over of ready wit, a famous raconteur and a hypnotiser of an audience, such is Graves.

I was speaking of Brighton. This to many of us means the Royal York and Royal Albion. This must not be taken as a boost, for Harry Preston doesn't want that. I have been at home there for so many years that personal reminiscences would not be complete without a few words. I once wrote of Harry in a sort of *Who's Who*.

“ LONGSHOREMAN HARRY ”

“ Good-morning, sir ; Thank you, sir ; Yes, sir ; I hope everything is all right, sir. Come and have a small bottle, old boy.” This, all in one breath, indicates, first, the host, and then, the comrade. Can swim, fight, swear, teach bull terriers tricks. Is charming to old ladies and bows to young ones, keeping one eye open all the time. Is said to have one eye in the back of his head, which he protects with a skull cap when swimming. Has an inseparable brother and affectionate sisters ; converses with *empressement* and invented the Royal York salute. His servants understand him and his guests think they do, but it is six to four nobody does. Is wise enough to know himself quite well. Disappears through a

TOUGH GAME ALL ROUND

trap-door before midnight, but is always about early next day. Never comes to London without a silk hat; is determined never to become provincial. Knows every wave in the Channel from Dungeness to Bournemouth. Is by nature a sea dog, by accident a landlord and amateur minstrel."

Dick Preston endears himself to all those who come in contact with him. He is a greater asset to the Preston enterprises than perhaps many have thought about. We can focus Dick, yet there is always something to discover afresh in him, whereas we know the latitude and longitude of nautical Harry.

I have said I have known Brighton for years, but the atrocious manners of some of the young women and the madhouse manner of callow youth with the meaningless motor-car stare has spoilt the repose of the seaside; they are juvenile jars—empty; there is nothing in them to attract even a wasp.

Talking of stings reminds me that gambling houses where "a game is to be had" are quite an innovation during the past few years. Mind you, the game is not always a cinch for the man who runs the show. For there are lurkers to take a chance and either give stumer cheques or "I.O.U.'s." There are many young men who will squeal and consult a solicitor or friends the next morning how they can get out of it. Is it honest? What have we to do with honesty when a tough game is being played all round? But it must be understood that the men who run the gambling shows are not out for their health. They take places at big expense, provide everything elegant in the way of drink, cigars and a cold collation. Not only that, but they are so accommodating; much more than I would be, or a foreign club would be, but still they

OLD THEATRICAL FRIENDS

go on. There have been so many of them and they try so hard to attract clients. I have often wondered why they don't go the whole hog and have a "wheel" (roulette); this game is so fascinating that I believe, really, that even the hired butlers who come with the "prog" (provisions) would let one of the gentlemen who had been financed to "make up the game" off his tip to take the combined bank-roll of the servants to stake on a column or number. Still they meander on, and frequent all sorts of places where there is something to be picked up.

The "proprietors" all know the regulars, and when they are about or in town. They think they know the strength, but many have looked down their noses the next morning when a review of who would make good and who would not was inevitable. It doesn't always pan out all bunce.

I have never been a good gambler, and have never affected these points from simple get-rich-quick motives. This can perhaps get a chalk to my virtues. At some of the smaller resorts the "assistance" has been remarkable. Silly people with but very little money; in some cases the place was run by a woman, and the hospitality consequently meagre. I could never understand serious men going in and dropping a monkey when they had such a glorious prospect for a week's racing on the same sum. But many haven't the time for racing: I suppose that's it.

One evening at a well-known resort a son of a peer won six thousand pounds and dropped eight thousand pounds afterwards, and yet he could finance a newspaper enterprise to the extent of ten thousand pounds; think of it, boys. Another, a rider, won four thousand pounds and then did in six thousand pounds above this and paid. I ask you, isn't it enough to make

SIMPLY—"SHEMMY"

ancestors bulge out the tombstones until they tumble as if there had been an earthquake? You don't know who falls for it. The solid business or professional man may take a chance. The gambling spirit may be rife and after a magnum they may have the exaltation of thinking when they take a polite invitation out of their pocket: "Thank goodness for you."

Don't think I'm knocking the shows. I would permit anyone to do his bit in any way he chose to, and, as I have said, the enterprising "chemmy" (pronounced "shemmy") runner is not always a rook; he can be a decoy-duck shot in the inflated part by what should be considered and labelled his stool-pigeons (American expression). Talk about New York and Paris being "tough"; there are plenty of syringers of life blood round London.

CHAPTER LII

THE LAST LAP—THE REAL “SELF”

My Friends, Men and Women—Lord Northcliffe's Dictum—
Hoping On—Apologia

I HAVE had many friends in all classes of life. Many I have kept, while I suppose it is inevitable to drift apart from others through various causes which may not constitute faults—on either side. Years go by and different surroundings are met with; change of environment can mean change of people. By “friends,” men and women both are included. I cannot recollect having made an enemy among the former, and if with the latter there can exist the irresponsibility of sharp tongues; other men—better than I—have been “spoken about,” from various causes, from “giving a loser” to “preferring the most congenial in womankind.” The advantage women have as a sex is that their mind changeth very little from one year to the other or from one century to another. That is the charm of retrospect. Existing conditions studied are the only differences from when they were the pivot of the philosophy of the ancients, or the theme of Shakespeare. Women of all ages are the same; they wear different clothes; they use face-creams instead of cold water; they distort or improve the figure; they may luxuriate in their hair or wear transparencies or switches, but, they have ever the same attribute—charm! This belongs to the garrulous or the amiable, the shrew or she of the placid plaited hair; the natural beauty or she who

WOMAN

has to make the best of herself. What is different now to mid-Victorian days or from the time of Fielding or Queen Elizabeth? There was a pose of modesty once, now few get offended if a man forgets his table manners; that is the only real difference between my mother's friends and some of her son's acquaintances.

The man who hasn't loved—and I'm going to make the whole of this impersonal—is a mountain of uninteresting basaltic rock which there is no point to explore. A woman who can't be stirred by a healthy man's words—whose speech is sober—is a monument of sterilised maidenhood. Posing flappers should have no place in our consideration; they are roe-less herrings who, if fortunate, keep a maid to sign for the presents. Their dogs are the only things in breeding possessed, their pose is the positiveness of possession—of youth or a youth. The flaunt of the flapperish hair is because they haven't the cult of the careful coiffure. The different stages of a man's experiences of woman without any chronological order are:

The first favourite.

The second favourite.

The winner on form.

The abuser to the face but the defender in absence.

The one who made the pace a cracker.

The intelligent "aide."

The catch-phrase breather.

The woman who *must*—mix 'em.

The one who could not face the starting gate.

The one who ran out.

And, can't I think of another one? Oh yes—

The "perfect lady."

I have written this book for my friends, acquaintances and for a public I have been known to, and yet

THE LAST LAP

did not know. There are stories of many men and different countries, mostly good men—very few bad. It may give some idea to the unsophisticated as to what can happen. There was the necessity of intruding myself into these pages which was not exactly the idea I started out with, but that will serve to keep the personal note, and maybe in generations to come the historic past so far as it concerns the turf may be quoted.

In reading over the proofs and recalling certain chances in life which were missed, there should be many regrets that, as a man of over fifty, a great mark has not been made in the world—chiefly financially. Instead of that, day succeeds day with the regular task. But how lucky we are when we have work which is to bring in a living. Lord Northcliffe has laid down the axiom to his young men : “ If you don’t make money and put it away before you’re forty you never will.” I have perhaps shown that I didn’t have to wait till forty to make *some* money, but—putting it away!—excuse *me*, Lord Northcliffe. But I hope he’s wrong about “ never will.” It’s still lying about if we are not short-sighted.

There is the pathetic note in this work in reading names to notice before some “ the late.” Each of us has his turn, and all we can hope is that the memory can be favourable. A man can only do his best ; let that come in your ante-post estimate and when my number is up, and I don’t quite tip the scale, throw in the make-weight of your friendship to put down the balance in my favour against faults—obvious and alleged—as the author of this book. But why be grave ? There may be more to tell some day ; I should like to live to be a hundred years old—*life* is so attractive.





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