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ACE SPORTS

MONTHLY

MAY

An
'ACE'
Magazine



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*Great
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By JOE ARCHIBALD
-And Others*

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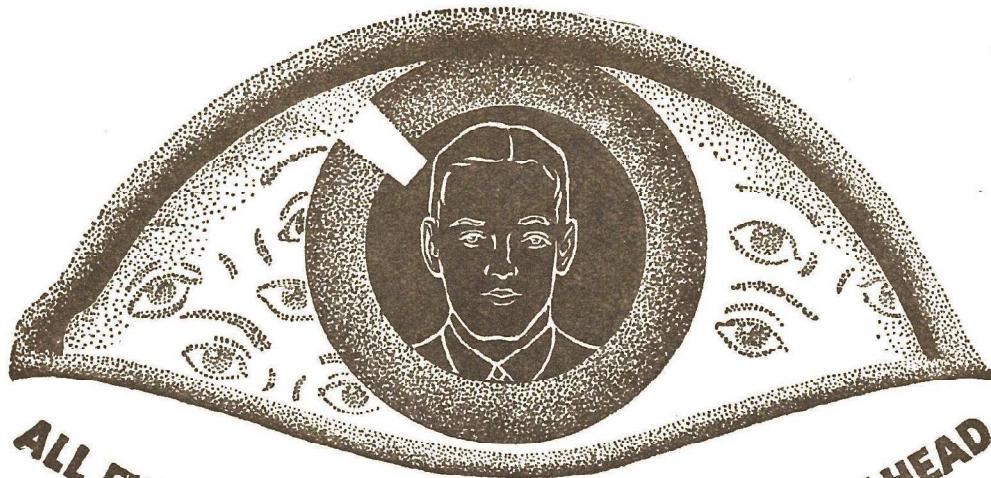
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ACE SPORTS

A. A. WYN
Editor

MONTHLY

HARRY WIDMER
Managing Editor

Vol. V

May, 1937

No. 1

Every Story Complete—No Serials!

GHOST GLOVER (Great Boxing Novel)	Joe Archibald	10
<i>Packy Strange, middleweight contender, had made three promises. To his pal, he had given his word to lose the title money. To his manager, he had vowed to win the title. And to himself, he had sworn to keep both bargains.</i>		
BAG-RAT FRAMEUP (Golf Story)	Ross Russell	36
<i>To save an obscure young pro from defeat, a bag-rat caddy determined to show that a rat was best equipped to ferret out phony gutta percha.</i>		
GRUDGE GRAPPLER'S MANHUNT (Wrestling Yarn)	Bob De Haven	46
<i>Danny Lamb knew it would be asking for a broken neck to single out his enemy among seven other gladiators in a titanic ring of wholesale mat murder.</i>		
SPORTFOLIO		56
<i>Some illustrated freak facts about the sport game.</i>		
WHO'S WHO IN MOVIE PUGDOM	William J. McNulty	58
<i>How star battlers give the silver screen the right punch for top entertainment.</i>		
HURLER'S HERITAGE (Baseball Novelette)	Robert S. Fenton	61
<i>Vic Burney's father had been a great ball player. But to make the Tanager team, Burney had to prove that he was no son of his father.</i>		
THESE GAMES CALLED SPORT	Charles Kenmore Ulrich	83
<i>How sports have come to us through the centuries.</i>		
THE BANTAM SCARAMOUCHE (Prizefight Story)	John Scott Douglas	85
<i>Kindly Manager Grogan wanted to save Tommy Patrick, young bantamweight, from an early ticket to slap-happy land. But Tommy had too strong a flare for fighting outside the ring.</i>		
NET MERCHANT (Tennis Yarn)	Paul Chadwick	99
<i>Marty Kernan had to make only one error to lose. But to win, he had to defeat a thousand and one unofficial opponents.</i>		

Cover by Rafael M. de Soto

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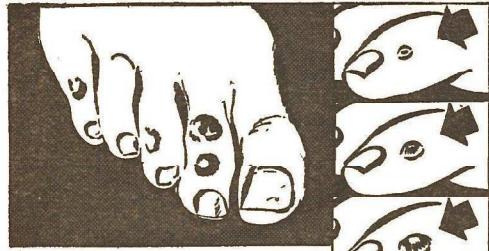
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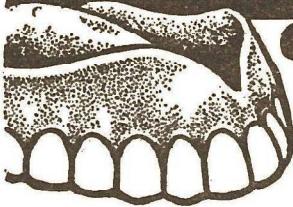
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I have completed your wonderful method for Guitar. For the past year I have been teaching and I have earned \$200 thanks to the U. S. School of Music.

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*A. O., Minn.

*Actual pupils' names on request. Pictures by professional models.

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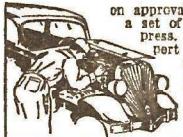
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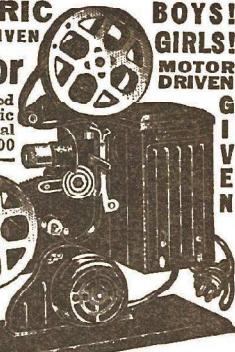
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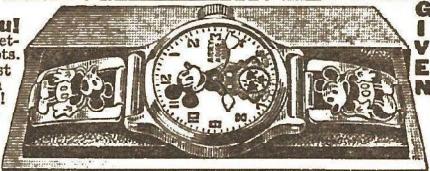
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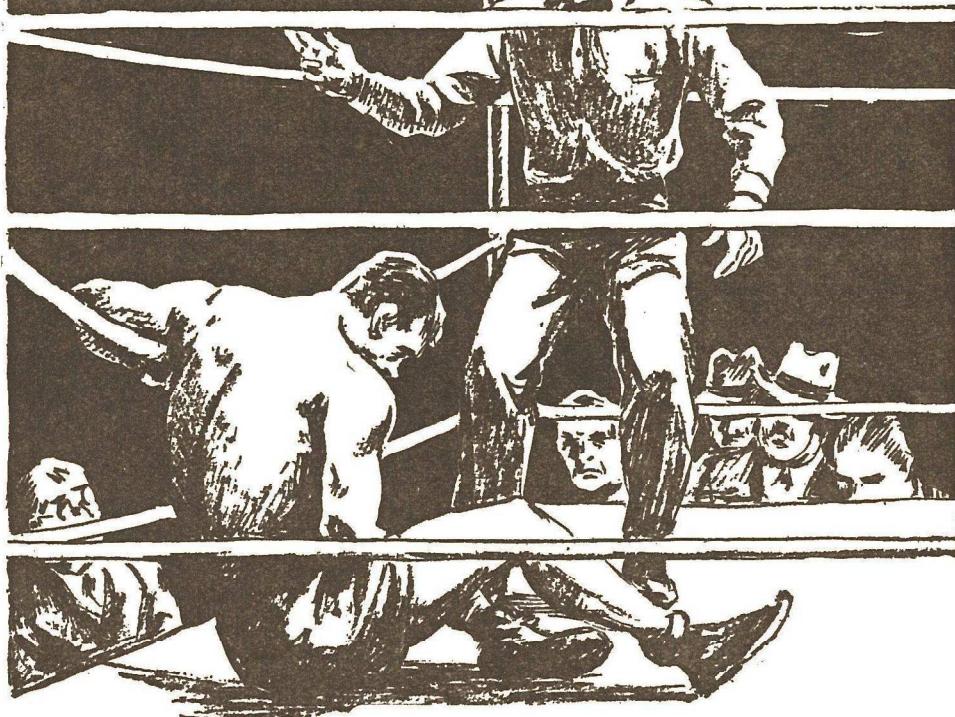
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Ghost

Great



OUTSIDE the ring a man is young at twenty-six. Inside the ropes he is old at that age, especially when nine of his years have been spent absorbing the bludgeoning of padded red gloves. Marty Kayne was fighting his two hundred and first ring battle for the entertainment of several hundred customers of the tank town fight club, and he showed it.

One or two old timers remembered when Marty first came into the professional ring as fresh and unmarked as the night he had won the Golden Gloves in a big city arena. But Marty was a Ghost Glover now. Unwise managers and careless handlers had tripped him up on the road to a throne. His face was battle-scarred

and his ears were cauliflowered. A clever man in his corner might have saved those ears by lancing them at the back when Marty got them. Managers who had not been money hungry could have side-stepped a lot of useless fights and perhaps Marty Kayne would have been looked upon now as something other than a grinning gargoyle.

Of course Marty Kayne might have been a little at fault too. He was of the old school of give-and-take fighters. During his first few years in the ring Marty had given more than he had received, often joking that the Good Book said that it is more blessed to do that. In fact Marty Kayne had brought a punch into the ring that

Glover

Boxing Novel



By Joe Archibald

Author of "Fury on Ice," "Outcast Basketeer," etc.

The middleweight championship was at stake, and contender Packy Strange had made three promises. To his pal, he had given his word to lose the title money. To his manager, he had vowed to win the title. And to himself, he had sworn to keep both bargains.

electrified the fistic world. He would swing for the jaw with his right and at the same time bring forward the right foot and right side of his body. He would check the swing in mid-air, however, and shoot a terrific left to a man's unguarded wind. It was a right-hand type of blow, although struck with the left and reinforced by the crossing of his braced body.

Marty Kayne had upset a lot of good men with that punch. Now his

timing was gone. His movements were sluggish. Fighters were not afraid of Marty Kayne's famous "Portside Sleeper" any more. He telegraphed it far ahead of time, and they would dance away from it and laugh at him.

Marty Kayne was fighting a man who was on the way up. For a year now he had met these eager-eyed glove tossers as he trekked in the opposite direction on the way to oblivion. For a few dollars he had challenged their

right to pass, only to go stumbling along on the back-trail again with fresher battle scars and even more bewilderment in his brain.

Nevertheless Marty Kayne still pleased the crowd. He did not back up. He kept sailing in, taunting the smart youngsters, telling them to come on in and not be afraid. The old battler grinned when they would not, nodding his approval, and then he would go tearing in to bring that old familiar roar from the crowd. Often of late that roar had been drowned in his ears when a solid punch rocked him. Three times in a row, now, Marty Kayne had gone out via the *kayo* route.

Steve McHugh, the up and coming middleweight who faced Marty tonight, looked as if he were going to make it the fourth *kayo*, and it was only the second round of an eight-round fight. He worked carefully on the fading Marty Kayne, mixing up his punches, making the tired veteran force the fighting. He knew the old-timer had nothing left but the determination to please, to give the crowd their money's worth. A crowd will cheer any man who gives them a sight of blood, even if it has to come out of that man's own body.

Marty Kayne weathered the second round. He went back to his corner and seemed oblivious to the listless attention from his handlers. He was thinking of a little flat in a big city one hundred miles away. There was a young woman there and a tiny year-old baby. Marty had intended to quit when he married Jo. He had had ten thousand dollars in the bank then. But the crash that was heard around the world wiped those savings out over night. Marty had tried a job outside the ring but had found that he could not make as much in six months as he could in one night with the leather gloves.

"Give me just two more years," he told Jo. "Then I'll hang up the gloves for good. We'll have enough for that little place in the country—"

MARTY KAYNE heard the buzzer and he flinched a little. He wanted to go somewhere and rest his tired, aching frame. There were six more rounds to go. Eighteen more minutes of punishment.

The bell. McHugh tore out of his corner reeking with energy. He knew he could finish it any time now. Marty Kayne knew it, too, but he would not back up. The kid would have to stand and slug if he wanted to beat Marty. McHugh was willing. The crowd let out a mad, whistling roar as the fighters stood toe to toe in the middle of the canvas and threw leather. The thud of the sodden battering rams reached to the far corners of the ring. Marty Kayne's knees began to cave as the young middleweight's gloves sank deep into his meridian. A short right uppercut snapped his head back. He hung on while the crowd raved at the ref to tear him loose.

Marty Kayne reeled at the break, then bore in again to shoot a weak right toward that blur that was dancing in front of him. A hard punch sent him toward the ropes, and he bounded off them without knowing how—or why. His senses were slipping away with every punch that landed. Instinct held him up for another few seconds. What was the matter with the bell? Why didn't the thing clang? Maybe they had forgotten all about the bell. An hour must have slipped by since last he had heard it. A roar like a giant waterfall was making his head swim.

The canvas had turned to a stretch of deep thick mud. It sucked him in deeper, deeper and he flung out a heavily weighted hand to save himself. He was barely conscious of a terrific jar that shook him all over. The mud sucked him in swiftly until there was nothing but blackness. But Marty did not mind. It was a delicious sensation, this falling into a deep sleep that blotted out everything in the world.

Marty Kayne's seconds worked over him for fully five minutes after Mc-

Hugh and his handlers had left the ring. Marty wanted to know what had happened and what he was doing in the fight club.

One of the handlers clipped to another: "He hit his head pretty hard when he went down. Maybe we'd better git a doc in here. How you feel, kid?"

"All right, I guess," Marty replied woodenly. "I can't—remember—much, though."

One of the seconds went out, a smirk on his face. He had his five bucks and that was all that mattered to him. The other handler hurriedly collected Marty Kayne's clothes and tossed them onto a low wooden bench. "Take a couple of minutes, kid, 'til you git your marbles back. Then ya'll be okay. Well, s'long. If ya fight again, ya're plain nuts!"

The man who ran the small town fight club sat in his office later wondering why Marty Kayne had not come in for his hundred dollars. At last he sent a henchman out to investigate. The man returned grinning.

"The guy's gone. Think he was punch drunk. Bet he don't know his own name if ya ask me."

"Tough," remarked the promoter, shaking his head. "I remember when they called him the next middleweight champion, and that was only five years ago. He didn't get rid of that manager of his soon enough. Wasn't going to let him fight here, but he looked as if he needed dough. Seemed desperate. He's got a wife an' a kid, you know. Well, there goes another good boy into the scrap heap. Give me a drink, Bat. I got a bad taste in my mouth."

JO KAYNE waited all that night for Marty to come home. She waited all the next day and the next night. Then she went out to ask help of a man who had been Marty Kayne's friend for a long time. White-haired Andy Moore was still a good man to have in a fighter's corner. He had left Marty Kayne five years ago when he

had disapproved of the manager the fighter had tied up with. But he had harbored no ill feelings for the battler. He had said: "I won't string along with any fighter who is handled by Jaffre, kid. He'll ruin you. I don't want it ever to be said that I had a hand in ruining a fighter."

Andy Moore was emerging from one of his favorite haunts in the big mid-western city when Jo Kayne touched him on the arm. The old man turned, his eyes widening questioningly. "Ma'am, I—"

"I'm Jo Kayne, Mr. Moore," the young woman said. "You used to be Marty's friend. I didn't know anyone else to come to. Marty went away a couple of days ago. He said he had a fight but he didn't say where. He—didn't come—back, Mr. Moore. Something's wrong. I know it. Please help me—please. He—"

Old Andy Moore's voice was husky as he replied: "I'll call the newspapers, Mrs. Kayne. They'll know where he fought last. He'd have to use his own name to get a fight. That's all he had." He laid a kindly hand on the distraught woman's arm and said: "Go home, Mrs. Kayne, and wait until you hear from me."

It did not take long for the old trainer to find out where Marty Kayne had fought his last fight. He promptly followed up the lead by going to the tank town where it had taken place. At the promoter's office he was told how Kayne had walked out without claiming his purse. When Andy Moore explained the circumstances, the promoter gave him the one hundred dollars due the fighter to be delivered to Kayne's wife.

"Marty took one punch too many," the old-timer said, shaking his head. "We've got to find him. Maybe he don't even remember his own name. Some day maybe they'll pass a law—" Shoving the bills into his trousers pocket, Andy Moore bit off further speech and walked out of the shabby fight club.

Three months passed during which Jo Kayne waited for word that Marty had been found. There were a lot of derelicts who had crawled away from cauliflower alley to hide. All had been pounded into men who bore great similarity to one another. It was hard to single out any of them and call them by name. Cauliflower alley soon forgot all about Marty Kayne.

His wife waited in an obscure place to which she had moved so as to conserve her small resources. The time came when they were depleted. The fight to keep body and soul together would not have been worth the effort were it not for little Phil. Poor baby, he looked pretty hungry to his mother. If he had been properly nourished, Jo Kayne felt that he would have been walking by now. She felt a stab of horror go through her when he clenched his little fist. She pictured him grown, stumbling along in the dark like his father, Marty Kayne. That was when she thought of turning on the gas.

Before she went to sleep that night Jo Kayne had made up her mind. In the morning she would leave the baby where good people would find him and take care of him. Only in that way would he get the chance that she could never give him. An icy misery wrapped her heart—misery too deep for tears.

JO KAYNE kissed little Phil and eased him from her lap to the floor. One of his tiny feet was placed firmly on a white sheet of wrapping paper. Only for a moment, however, because the little fellow could not stand up very long by himself. In an instant he plumped down on the floor and whimpered a bit. His mother picked up the paper on which the imprint of the baby foot was stamped in soot from the stove.

Jo Kayne knew that she would never part with that paper. That little footprint was something that life could never take from her. She folded the paper carefully and placed it

in an envelope with an overdue light bill. Next she turned to the loving and final task of washing the baby and preparing his scant wardrobe. When he was asleep, she knelt down by his cot and prayed for strength to do the thing she had mapped out for herself.

Late the next day, Jo Kayne spent part of her last funds for bus fare to a fashionable suburb of the city. With darkness heavy around her, she quickly singled out a pretentious dwelling and waited her chance. When the street was clear, she slipped through a gate, hurried up the walk and placed the baby on the steps. "Goodbye," she whispered. "Some day, little man, you'll—make it—worth while." She left him then and hurried away.

An hour later Jo Kayne climbed the rickety stairs of the tenement where she lived. When the door opened and closed upon her, she felt as if the bare walls had closed in on her to suffocate her. She had nothing left but a small gold locket with Marty's picture in it, a picture taken when Marty had been unmarked and had looked with smiling eyes toward the middleweight crown. Just a footprint of the child she had given Marty—that was all. She would have to go away far from this place associated with the baby. It was the thought of that which finally broke the icy wall that encased her, and she lay sobbing on the cot where she and the baby had slept their last sleep together.

"Oh, God," she prayed at last, "let some one kind get my son and make a man of him. God help me to find Marty—please." A long time she lay staring at the ceiling, her thoughts engaged with the future. If little Phil should be adopted, he would get a new name. Without the name of Kayne he would never wonder whether or not he would have made a fighter. The horror that had overtaken his father would never be his fate. For that alone the sacrifice was worth while.

Out of swollen and glazed eyes Jo

Kayne read the papers avidly the next day. An item of news caught her eye and left her cold and sick. The baby—little Phil—had been found but the people had turned him over to the foundling's home. Police were looking for the mother.

Fear made her cast the paper aside then and she began to pack her few belongings in feverish haste. She picked up the newspaper to wrap an extra pair of shoes in. As she spread it out she saw a name in a stick of type. Marty Kayne! Riven with dread she began to read and her thin body became numb.

"The body of a man believed to be that of Marty Kayne, a boxer, was found in a ditch near this village early this morning by a truckman. Kayne, who used to be a ranking middle-weight, evidently was the victim of a hit and run driver. There were several pennies in his pocket and an empty billfold bearing the initials M. K. The body was removed to Cannell's Funeral Parlor in Grove City. Kayne was known to have had a wife and child somewhere in Chicago. Efforts to commun—"

Jo Kayne covered her face with her hands and moaned. She was standing like that when Andy Moore came into the bare room.

"You've—heard, Mrs. Kayne?" he said diffidently. "I—"

The young woman nodded and dropped her hands. Her face looked dead with no soul mirrored in the eyes. In hollow tones she said: "I can't even give him—a decent—"

The old trainer was kindness itself. "Let me handle everything for you, Mrs. Kayne. You'd better not go there. Let me take care of everything."

"Y—you're kind. I'll never forget you," she said after a moment's silence.

"Where's the baby?" Andy asked.

"A—woman is keeping him—for me," Jo replied. "I'll get him afterwards and go—away."

Andy Moore went out, the muscles around his jaws working.

THE orphanage at Bell Haven was not unlike other asylums scattered all over the land. It was filled with youngsters whose hearts held but one hope, the hope that some one would come and take them away. The moss-covered bromide at Bell Haven that never failed to curb a recalcitrant inmate was: "Nobody will ever want you if you are not a well-behaved child. Every time you break the rules here, it means that you will have to stay longer."

There were several orphans at Bell Haven who listened to that with tongues in their cheeks. Two of them stood in a corner of the big yard one afternoon looking up at the blue sky. One was a little taller than his companion. The people in authority at the institution called him Tom Strange and the kids called him Packy. To them the nickname sounded tough and Packy Strange wanted everybody to think that he was tough.

He was only twelve years old but there was a hardness in his eyes that might have been seen in the orbs of a man who had lived three times that many years. There was a slight curl to his lips and a recklessness in his hazel eyes. Young as he was, Packy Strange seemed bitter with his lot and forever groping for the reason.

The boy with Packy was not looking at the sky now. Instead, he was looking at his companion as if Packy Strange were the most important being in the universe. To small Vince Darrell he probably was because Vince was not as strong as most of the kids in Bell Haven and he had to take a lot of abuse when Packy was not around.

"It must be great to live away from here," Vince said longingly. "I bet it's like being in another world."

"Maybe we'll find out," Packy bit out. "I know a way we can get out of here. Want to go?"

Vince Darrell looked scared. "You wouldn't dare, would you, Packy?"

"Sure I would. What's there to be afraid of?" Packy retorted. "A guy

can't be afraid of nothin' if he wants to get along. You think I'm goin' to wait until somebody comes along an' adopts me? Hah, what do they always take? Some curly-headed little lamb with big blue eyes like that Sampson kid was! You got to be pretty an' not even say 'darn.' Me—I'm goin' to be tough, Vince. On the outside, you got to be tough. See?"

"But how you goin' to get out?" Vince asked, still scared.

"Through the laundry," Packy said. "In the big baskets of towels an' napkins an' things we have to pack up on Wednesdays. What do you say? Want to come?"

"I—I don't think so, Packy," Vince replied. "I'd be scared. What would you do when you got out?"

"I'll do somethin'. I'll find some place to go—any place but here. I'll take care of you, Vince, if you come with me."

"I dunno," Vince whispered, voice fading at the enormity of the scheme suggested to him.

"Well, I guess you was born scairt," Packy Strange said, not critically. "But maybe 'tain't your fault. Well, I'm goin'."

Vince Darrell felt a little sick. He did not want to go, but if he stayed there would be no Packy Strange to keep the other kids from tormenting him. He turned and saw a couple of small boys coming toward them. His face paled and he said: "There's Whitey Malone, Packy. He's the guy who give me that kick yesterday."

Packy said: "Yeah?" He walked fast toward the pair of kids who were cutting across the yard. "Whitey," he called out, "come 'ere."

The tow-headed orphan stopped, eyes wary. "What d'ya want?"

"You kicked Vince yesterday. Nobody touches him when—"

"Naw? Well, whatta you want to do about it?"

The fight was short-lived. Packy Strange hit Whitey Malone twice and that was all there was to it. Whitey sped toward the Super's office with

blood running down the front of his shirt.

Packy busied himself about his chore of policing up the yard. "That's what Dempsey said to do—hit 'em in the belly, then hit 'em on the chin!" In ten minutes the victor in the battle was getting his punishment, but he did not mind. He was not going to be around long.

IT was the next day that Packy Strange and Vince Darrell were raking up dirt and leaves just inside one of the big iron gates. Vince suddenly dropped his rake and pawed through a heap of soggy, hard-packed foliage. He came up with something in his hand and Packy took it and rubbed the dirt from it. It was a small, round, flat object, a gold locket. Packy had a hard time getting it open. When the lid snapped apart, both kids looked closely at the picture revealed.

"Gee, lookit," said Vince. "A fighter!"

"Yeah," agreed Packy. "You kin see part of his boxin' glove. Wonder who lost it?"

"Maybe some lady that looked in here sometime. Lots of ladies do that," Vince went on in a puzzled voice. "They always look like they was tryin' to find somebody that belonged to 'em. Maybe our mothers—huh, Packy?"

"Maybe," agreed Packy Strange, studying the picture. "I'd like to meet him when I grow up. I'd knock his block off. Leavin' a kid in a place like this ain't right." He scowled at the face looking up at him.

Little Vince seemed hypnotized by the picture in the locket. In a sort of awesome voice he murmured: "Wouldn't it be swell, Packy, if—if—he was my dad, huh? Guess I'll make believe it is. That's what—I'll tell everybody it is. Then maybe they won't keep raggin' me."

"Aw, you ain't no fighter, Vince," Packy said. "Let me have it."

For the first time in their friendship Vince Darrell opposed Packy

Strange. Somehow he did not want to lose the locket. Everybody had a father—somewhere. And this one was going to be his with the locket to prove it. His eyes were stormy when he turned to ask Packy for the thing he had found.

"Finders keepers, Packy," he pleaded. "Give it to me."

"Listen," Packy insisted, "it don't mean nothin'. When we get out, we can maybe sell it somewhere. It's made of gold, Vince—"

The smaller boy checked a sudden burst of tears and nodded. "Awright, Packy."

"We'll run away—the way I said, Vince," Packy went on. "How 'bout it?"

"Okay," little Vince Darrell agreed in a whisper.

THREE nights later, in the back of a big laundry truck, Packy Strange and a white-faced Vince Darrell crawled out of two big hamper and groped for each other. "C'mon," whispered Packy. "We'll drop out the back."

The driver of the truck kept his eyes glued to the road ahead. A thick mist obscured his vision and the headlights barely cut through it for fifty feet. All his attention was needed to keep from going into the ditch even though he drove very slowly. Under cover of the white blanket of mist and the noise of the toiling truck engine, Packy Strange and his little pal slipped off the truck unobserved and darted into the woods that bordered one side of the widening road.

For a long time they crouched there in the dark. Finally they trudged two miles along the road toward a filling station and refreshment stand. While the authorities around the countryside were being notified to keep on the lookout for the runaways, the young fugitives were rumbling eastward in a big moving van. Covered with the paddings which had been used to pack the furniture evidently carried by the

van on its westward journey, the boys fell asleep at last.

Twelve hours passed before Packy Strange and Vince Darrell scrambled out of their conveyance. They found themselves in the seething warehouse district of an eastern city. Bewilderment filled their eyes as they looked around at this new world. Even sturdy Packy Strange was a little scared. "Did you ever think there was a place this big, Vince?" he asked in an awed voice.

His companion shook his head. Vince was very hungry, but he was anxious to keep up with the estimate Packy had of him so he remained bravely silent. When Packy paused before the window of a cheap lunchroom where four red squares of chopped meat were sizzling on a griddle, his eyes widened and involuntarily he slid his tongue along his lips.

"Maybe we kin steal somethin' to eat," Packy suggested. "Off a pushcart. I saw one filled up with candy an' fruit an' stuff."

"If a policeman catches us, we'll git sent back to the orphanage," Vince said, hunger forgotten at that chilling thought.

Packy was desperate, however. He ducked inside a group of people standing around a pushcart and as quickly wormed out again. "Run," he called to Vince. "I got me some peanuts."

The pushcart vendor set up a cry. The orphans ran as fast as their legs could carry them and soon eluded pursuit. They crawled into a blind alley and hid behind a packing case where they lay trembling for awhile.

"Here, Vince," Packy said at last. "Eat some salted peanuts. They fill you up."

"I wisht I hadn't've run—away," Vince whispered in a squeaky voice. "They'll sure find us, Packy, an' maybe it will be reform—"

"Don't be yeller," Packy snapped. "You got to be tough." He munched peanuts hungrily, and both boys remained silent for a long while. Then Packy said: "It's gittin' dark, Vince.

Maybe we could crawl into the case an' sleep. We—"

A man's voice cut through the quietness of the alley. He reached down suddenly and lifted a paralyzed Vince Darrell to his feet. "What're ya doin' here?" he growled.

"R-run, Packy," Vince choked out. "I—"

But Packy Strange did not run. "Huh? I got you out of that orphanage, Vince, and I stick with ya," the hazel-eyed boy said.

The man freed Vince. He was a beefy, small-eyed individual with heavy jowls. His skin was swarthy so that when he suddenly grinned, his white teeth flashed by contrast.

"Runaways, huh?" he slurred. "Maybe I ought to call the cops. But maybe I won't. I need a couple kids that ain't afraid of the dark. How'd ya like to work fer me?"

Vince Darrell yearned to run as fast as his legs would carry him, but Packy Strange stood still. "Sure we would," he said.

"You sell papers enough an' I'll see ya git grub," the dark-skinned stranger promised them.

"It ought t'be easy sellin' papers," said Packy bravely. He would not for the world have revealed his inner feelings.

"Some places, yeah," the man said, scraping his heavy beard with a thumb nail. "But you got to be able to take a lot to sell 'em around here. A lot of guys think they own the corners." He gestured toward a doorway. "Foller me. I'll show ya where you kin sleep. Any cops come around, you're my kids. Get it?"

Packy Strange nodded, then whispered to Vince: "Ya see? We're all set. We're gonna work an' when we git enough money, we'll git out and go some place else. Ya ain't scairt any more now, are ya, Vince?"

THE orphans slept in a small sky-light room that night. In the morning they ate some bread and butter and drank some muddy looking

coffee that the man brought them. He told them his name was Tony Perelli and that he ran the newspaper business in the district.

That day Packy Strange found out that a kid had to be able to take it to sell papers in that part of the city. Three times he had to use his fists that morning and by noon the word went around to all the newsboys that a new kid was on deck and that he was a tartar who could handle himself. But when Packy returned to Tony Perelli's place he found Vince Darrell sitting in a corner with his face battle-scarred and gory.

"He ain't no good for me," the beefy man said to Packy. "He got chased right off the street. I don't want him."

"Okay," said Packy, hiding his disappointment, "we'll git out then. I don't stay if Vince don't. 'Tain't everybody who kin use his fists. Maybe he wa'n't meant to for some reason."

Tony Perelli laughed. "All right, kid, I keep him around. Maybe in some other way I'll find things for him to do. Sure, both of ya stay." He looked Packy over with friendly eyes. "Say, you got a punch, kid. You knocked tough little Squint Moriarty down twice this morning they tell me. Maybe you don't sell papers all the time. I got a friend that runs the West End Boys' Club. Sometimes they give out good prizes fer kids that fight good. How'd ya like to put on the gloves, huh?"

Packy hesitated. "I never fought with gloves. But I bet it don't hurt your hands so much."

The cops trailed Packy to Tony Perelli's place a few days after that because the newsboy had been the center of a hot fist fight on a disputed busy corner. Vince was not around when the cop followed the boy in. The bluecoat asked a lot of questions and smirked at the answers.

"Your boy, huh?" he said unbelievingly. "He don't look as if he would be. Well, one more fight, Perelli, and

I run the kid in. Don't forget that. He's a trouble-maker."

"He tries to sell papers," said Tony, "an' they won't let him. He's gotta fight. That ain't wrong."

The cop shrugged and went out.

Tony turned to Packy Strange. "Tonight we go to the club, kid. I got a guy for you to fight. You get a watch if ya win. Maybe five bucks, Packy. You kin lick the Greek. He ain't so much. How'd ya like that?"

"Awright," replied Packy. "I want to be a fighter. There ain't much money in sellin' papers."

Vince came in later and Tony said to him: "Tell me about it later, kid. Me an' Packy are talkin' about the fight business. Maybe some day you manage him with me, huh, Vince? It's good you run into me instead of somebody that would turned ya over to the bulls. I hope ya don't forgit what I done for ya."

THE West End Club was a doubtful recreation center. It was more like a meeting place for young toughs and older human wolves who could make use of them in countless nefarious ways. Tony Perelli led his young charge into an ill-smelling room where half a dozen other kids were peeling off their clothes and donning trunks and soft shoes. A tall, thin, ratty-faced man was there chewing on a cigar.

"Lo, Tony," he said out of the corner of his mouth. "This the kid you was tellin' me about? He don't look so hot."

"No," Tony clipped. "Well, he'll kill Pete Poulos. Four rounds they fight, huh? What does the winner git, d'Arcy?"

"I dunno. Mebbe five bucks an' a watch like I said. Accordin' to how many tickets we sell here tonight. Ya see any fly cops around, Tony?"

"Naw. But maybe ya better tell the boys to soft pedal on the noise, Duke. Too much noise makes the cops wise an' they come up an' run us out."

Packy Strange grinned at a kid who had a gap in his front teeth. A few hours before the kid had tried to drive him away from a good newspaper selling spot. Another kid, quite swarthy, looked at Packy from a corner. He was a head taller than the orphan boy and a lot older. Tony Perelli followed Packy's glance.

"He looks big, Packy," he said of the swarthy kid, "but ya know what they say about 'em fallin' harder, see? You do good now. I got to go and see about somethin'. Me an' Vince have to make a call."

"I got to have a man with me, ain't I?" Packy asked. "A second?"

"Duke'll give ya one. Now you knock him out, Packy. I see you later at the house." Tony Perelli waved a pudgy soiled hand and headed out of the club.

D'Arcy said: "What you git tonight all around—we split, huh Tony?"

"Like always," responded Tony.

Packy Strange went on for the second fight. There was no bell. D'Arcy told the boys when to go and when to stop. The four rounds lasted more than twelve minutes. The Greek was tough and had been inside the ropes before. Packy took a stiff right hand that dropped him in the second round and drew blood from his lips. He got up with the fires of rage burning through him and tore into Pete Poulos with both fists swinging. A right caught the bigger kid on the jaw and drove him to the canvas that was spread on the floor. There was no padding under it.

D'Arcy called the end of the round while the Greek was trying to get to his feet. Packy Strange knew he was being ganged while his second dabbed at his face with a damp towel. His eyes were stinging when he went out to meet the Greek kid again. He could hardly see. He had to grope his way in close to feel the swarthy battler against him before he swung his fists. He dropped the Greek again and staggered back to the ropes, pawing at

his eyes. D'Arcy's fighter got up and came in at him. Packy brought up his gloved right a little too late. A blow caught him high on the cheek bone and numbed it.

Just before the last round Packy Strange shoved his handler away and kept his eyes shut. He heard the Greek laugh. When he went out again, Packy knew he had to knock the dark kid out or he would never get anything for his pains. Tony Perelli would get sore and kick him around.

D'Arcy husked to the Greek, "Murder him, Pete," and pushed him out on the canvas. Packy Strange fought like a maniac, driving the bigger kid against the ropes where the Greek hung, bleeding and half conscious. Poulos finally got free of the strands and charged the orphan boy. Packy measured him and let him have everything that was in his right fist. Poulos went down to stay.

Packy strode up to d'Arcy and said: "You give me what Perelli promised I'd get or I go out and tell the cops."

"Sure, kid," Duke d'Arcy said easily. "I treat ya right. What d'ya say you sign up with me? I'll make you a champ. Tony don't have the pull I got."

"I want to get out of here," Packy rejoined. "I don't want to sign for anythin'." He went into the dressing room and began to rip off his gloves. Where had Tony Perelli gone with Vince? Funny Tony would not want to see his first fight. The boy was troubled.

D'Arcy grinned crookedly when Packy hurried out with a five-dollar bill and a gold watch. He laughed to himself and walked into his cubby-hole of an office. Tony would get the watch and the dough from the kid. They would split even. The customers would come back again to see the kids hammer each other's brains out. The next time Duke d'Arcy would bet on the new kid. He had to get Packy Strange somehow. He was looking far ahead to a gravy train that would

roll from town to town, d'Arcy riding on velvet with a two-fisted cash register in tow.

PACKY STRANGE felt pangs of uneasiness as he ran up the steps to the room where Tony lived. He was there ten minutes before the beefy man came in with Vince. The small boy looked pale and he licked his lips nervously.

The Italian forced a disagreeable laugh. "You win, hey kid?"

"Where you been, Vince?" Packy asked, ignoring Perelli. "You been doin'—something w r o n g. Listen, Tony—"

"Naw-w-w-w!" denied the beefy man. "Me an' Vince—we just pay a call. We go out—" He plumped down on the bed and a big hand hidden from Packy dug into the bedclothes. "You gimme the watch, Packy, an' the five bucks you get—"

"They're mine," Packy protested, eyes boiling. "I nearly got killed gittin' them."

"Yeah? Git tough with me, huh? Ya little squirt, I'll hand ya over to the cops. This time ya go where ya can't run away. Ha, you give me—" Tony Perelli jumped up from the bed. Boots were banging against the squeaky boards of the stairway below. "You keep your trap shut or I'll kill ya," Perelli ripped out at Vince in a hoarse whisper.

Suspicion dug deep into Packy's consciousness and made him feel sick. The kid who had been his pal for a long time had done something very wrong. He was sure of it. Tony Perelli had driven poor Vince to it. Packy sidled up to his friend just before the door was banged open by a policeman who was backed up by two more. Fumbling in his pocket, he pulled out the locket Vince had found at the orphanage. He dropped it into the smaller boy's pocket.

"Search the place!" a burly cop said. Packy recognized him as the one who had tailed him to Perelli's not so long ago.

"You got no right in here," Perelli flared. "We been here all night. We—"

"Oh yeah? There was a jewelry store robbed a little while ago. The robbers got in through a little window that only a kid as small as that one could wriggle through, Tony." The cop pointed to Vince who was white and trembling. "Then he unlocks the door so you could go in an' lift a lot of watches and rings. I been watching you, Perelli. You're a louse!"

"Here's the stuff, Murph," one of the searchers called out. "Take 'em in."

Packy spoke up then: "My pal wasn't in on it. It was me that helped Tony. I got this cut lip gittin' through the window. Vince—he's a good kid. He wouldn't do nothin' wrong."

"This kid's a delinquent," the cop said, pointing at Packy. "He's got to go somewhere, too. Come clean, kids. Who are ya?"

Packy made it easy for Vince and tough for himself. He said: "That's how it was. We run away from the orphan asylum. Vince has got a locket with his father's pitcher in it. Maybe you kin find him for Vince. He ain't done nothin', honest. He's too yeller. Anyways, I'm glad to git rid of him. Always snivelin'. Can't take it. Me, I'll git along better without him." The boy swallowed hard and kept on acting. He could not look at Vince Darrell. "I been kicked around a lot and now I'll git a little more in a reform school, but they won't break me. When I git out, I'll tear things apart. Sure, I'm tough, and I'll keep on takin' what I want—"

"Packy," pleaded Vince, "listen. You can't—"

"Shut up, sissy," Packy snapped. "Don't talk to me. I don't wanna see ya no more." His last words were thick and forced.

THE cops hustled the three out. On the way to the station house Packy said: "Don't lose the locket, Vince. They'll find your old man for

ya. He was a fighter. Maybe somebody who is on a newspaper will remember who he is." He laughed aloud and for the benefit of adult listeners said derisively: "Your old man a fighter!"

In Juvenile court little time was wasted on Packy Strange. The judge said he was a tough kid who needed a few years in reform school. Without further ado, the boy was turned over to the authorities who would conduct him to the reformatory. As he was being led out, he looked toward Vince and grinned broadly.

Vince Darrell's case was weighed with more thought. Considering the company he had been in, the judge thought that Vince would do with a stretch in an industrial school also. But the matter of the locket intrigued him. After court had been dismissed he called the newspaper boys into his chambers and told them to get busy with the photo. An enlargement might stir the memory of the old-timers in the fight racket.

Vince sat on a bench with tears blurring his sight and a stray one or two coursing down his cheeks. He wished he could have been tough like Packy Strange and have stood up on his two feet to tell them all that Packy had lied. But Vince Darrel had been lacking in courage and had welcomed the presence of the locket in his pocket as a way out. The vision of a barred reformatory window had drained his heart dry. And Packy was gone without even a thank-you for what he had done.

When Packy Strange was turned over to the head of the upstate reformatory, his record card was not very good. One of the men who had accompanied him to the place offered the comment that the boy was tough.

"Oh, I don't know," the gray-haired superintendent said, looking up over the top of his glasses. "Tommy doesn't look so tough to me. Listen, son, we'll give you all the chance in the world to find yourself up here. We won't be hard on you if you obey the rules. It

isn't hard at Green Gables. You have work to do, of course, but there's play, too, if you do the work right."

The boy pawed at his eyes. "I'm used to takin' it. You'll find out. I'll get away with anythin' if I see a chance."

"All right, Tommy, we understand each other then. I won't expect much of you."

Packy Strange found out that a guy had to be pretty low, however, to work against a man like Mr. Hanley. He forgot all about being a tough guy and worked hard. Obeying the rules meant that a fellow's time would be cut shorter. One of the reasons why Packy Strange changed was a man in charge of recreation. His name was Spike Jordan, and he knew a great deal about boxing. Spike never talked about the past. People at Green Gables had told Packy that. Maybe, they said, he was a little ashamed of it. But the boy kept asking him if he had ever been a champ, and at last the gray-haired, husky man smiled and shook his head.

"Nope," he said. "But I guess I could've been if I hadn't liked a good time better. I got in a lot of trouble, son. That's why I like it here. I can tell the kids that being tough gets 'em nowhere."

The old boxer taught Packy Strange all he knew about fighting. Late one autumn afternoon they were talking in a friendly fashion.

"What're you going to do when you get out of here, son?"

"I want to be a fighter, Spike," the boy replied. "I guess that's all I ever wanted to do."

"Well, don't be one unless you're a good one, Packy," Jordan advised. He brushed the palm of his hand across his forehead. "Sometimes I wonder how good I might have been." He seemed lost in thought.

"I bet you were a good fighter," declared young Strange. "And anyway, even if you weren't, you sure know a lot."

LATER that day Packy opened the straw suitcase to which he had fallen heir a little while back. He came upon some old newspapers. Packy liked to read about Vince Darrell and look at the picture of the mother his old friend had found. A picture of the locket Vince had found back at Bell Haven was in the papers, too. Vince Darrell's name had become Phil Kayne now, son of Marty Kayne whom everybody believed to be dead. Packy never tired reading the story that he had helped bring about. It had been a wild stab, that locket. A dozen or more kids at the orphanage might have been the son of Mrs. Marty Kayne. But it had been Vince who had found it and Vince had said: "Finders keepers." Yes, it had been a lucky break for the kid. The woman who was Vince's mother was quoted by the papers as saying:

"Why would my own son have found the locket I lost at the orphanage gate if God had not had a hand in it? Things like that don't just happen. It was the locket that brought him back to me. And I knew it was Phil the minute I saw the little mole on his right cheek. But for that locket my boy would have been sent away to a house of correction. The disgrace of that would have scarred his life."

Tommy Strange's lips tightened. He thought of what the more hard-bitten kids at the place often said: "This joint's the first step to the big house. You won't ever get a job nowhere if anybody finds out a guy was here." Well, that was one reason why Tommy was determined to be a boxer. References were not required when a fellow could knock out a guy with a punch. Spike Jordan had told him that hitters were scarce; that there was only one boxer in ninety and only one fighter in twelve who could hit.

"It is a rare and valuable gift to any man," Spike always said. "You've got it, Packy. I'd bet my life on it. Why you're only seventeen and you have hurt me more than once with

that right of yours. You're perfect with that shift too, Packy."

The boy went on reading. He read the part about Mrs. Kayne being thankful that her son was not in the ring. Strangely enough, one reporter had written, the widow of Marty Kayne ran a boarding house near one of New York's biggest gymnasiums, and a good many of her lodgers were connected with the ring. Packy sat looking into space. His thoughts went back to the days at Bell Haven when he had teased Vince about that mole on the boy's cheek.

"If you had any folks that came lookin' for you, Vince," he could hear himself again, "they'd know you right away by that mole. When they give you your name here when they found you, they should've called you Vince Moley or somethin'."

Packy Strange was not quite eighteen years old when he was dismissed from Green Gables. In the office he was given a brand new suit of clothes and fifty dollars. The money had been contributed by Spike Jordan, but the old boxer did not want the kid to know. When he told Packy goodbye, he found it hard to say what was in his mind.

"I'll miss you, kid," he said hesitatingly. "Will you promise me one thing, Packy?"

The young fellow nodded, and the best friend he had had at Green Gables went on: "Don't ever get into trouble again. Don't ever take the rap for some one else, Packy."

Tom Strange looked startled. "How did you—"

"Oh, I could tell," Spike Jordan replied. "You're not a crook, Packy. Goodbye, young feller, and don't forget what I've showed you." The white-haired man walked away with that slow, easy gait of his and his young pupil felt a sense of great loss when the door closed behind him.

NEXT day Packy Strange was in the big town. The old twist had gone from his lips, and his eyes had

lost their unnatural hardness. His strong face was wide-jawed and bronzed from work in the fields up-state. Five feet ten inches of compact frame attracted many a second glance from those who passed him by. There was an open expression in his hazel eyes, and a liteness about his walk that made him a promising bit of man material.

Packy sought out that part of the humming metropolis where his money would last the longest. After eating a hearty meal in a small lunch-room, he kept on walking northward. At the doorway of a brick building over which a sign announced KELLMAN'S GYMNASIUM, he paused. There was a stairway leading to the upper regions of the building and he looked up uncertainly. About to turn away, he felt some one catch him by the arm. Turning, he looked into a friendly face.

"Lookin' for work, kid? You look pretty husky. There's some upstairs if you want it. We've got a coming champ up there who needs a sparring partner. You've boxed, haven't you?"

Packy replied guardedly: "A little. You made a wild guess, didn't you?"

"Boxing's my business, kid. Somehow I can spot a man who can use his hands even if he doesn't have a mark on him. My name's Al Poole. What's yours?"

"Tom Strange—mostly I'm called Packy. Guess I'd like to have a try."

"That's the stuff!" The man named Poole led the way up the long flight of stairs and into a big gym where a number of fighters were going through training routine. He went up to a wiry, rangy fighter who was putting dents in a heavy bag. "Eddie," he said, "this boy can use a little dough. Go easy on him now. Packy, this is Eddie Raines, the next light-heavy champ. How much do you weigh, kid? Around one sixty, I'll bet. Eddie needs a light opponent, a boy who can make him step."

"I'll try my best," Packy Strange assured Poole. His pulse quickened as

he looked around. He had walked right into the game. The feeling was good.

Raines said: "Smokey, here, will show you around. Be ready in ten minutes, kid. We'll go three rounds. Right, Al?"

"That'll be plenty," responded Poole. "Follow Smokey, kid."

The big colored man eyed young Strange with interest as the boy stripped for action. He watched Packy pull on a pair of trunks and lace some battered boxing shoes. His eyes rolled with approval as the newcomer walked lightly toward a ring where Eddie Raines was doing some shadow boxing.

A couple of newspaper men edged toward Al Poole. "Who's the kid?" one asked. "He's built like a real fighter."

"Just a sparrin' partner," Poole said laconically.

Five minutes later the reporter grinned at Al Poole and called to him: "What was it you called him?"

Poole shook his head. "I'm dreamin'," he said in a dazed fashion. "There never was a prettier worker in this gym." He winced as Packy shot in a hard left to Raines' ribs. The heavier battler's eyes bugged out as he danced out of range of the unknown's educated red gloves. Slight-

ly angry, the light-heavy drove in to pin the kid's ears back; but his right missed, and he caught a short left jab on the chin.

DURING two more rounds the hangers-on in the gym forgot everything else that was going on. Fighters, managers, trainers, and lowly pug swipes crowded around the ring to watch the middleweight match Eddie Raines' every ring trick.

When the bell clanged to end the nine-minute workout, Eddie asked: "How many fights you had, kid?"

"None in a real place," Packy answered, hardly needing to draw a deep breath. Al Poole's glance clashed with that of the light-heavy. Poole nodded and took Packy Strange by the arm.

"Come with me, kid. You and I have got to talk things over." To the big colored man, he cracked: "I want this boy fixed up after his shower. You're handling a middleweight champion, Smokey. Handle him like he was blown glass. Packy, when you get through, come into Kellman's office."

Twenty minutes after Smokey had gotten through with young Strange that morning, the prospect's name was signed to a contract with Al Poole.

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"You've tied to a swell guy, kid," Eddie Raines told him. "It's a break that no sharpshooter saw you first."

"How old are you, kid?" Al Poole asked.

Packy thought fast. "Twenty," he said promptly.

Boxing writers gave the unknown middleweight a send-off in the morning editions. The gymnasium was packed to capacity for a few days as Packy Strange went through preliminary training. However, Al Poole would not allow the restless kid in the ring for six months. When he figured Packy was ripe for it, the boxer got a spot on a card at the St. Christopher Club uptown. Packy's opponent was Bat Lasking a man who had been around a lot in the cauliflower market. Poole knew that he would be able to find any chinks in Packy's armor if there were any to be found. Lasking had a way of doing that. The newspaper reporters came principally to look Packy Strange over. The main event interested them only mildly.

In the dressing room Al Poole said: "Watch him, kid. He's got a fair right and he's murder in close. Don't be too anxious. This fight don't mean much."

Packy Strange planned his battle before the bell. The man across from him looked somewhat sluggish. Fast footwork would make his bellows a little flat. When the signal came, Packy thought of Spike Jordan and leaped away from his stool. Lasking was a mixer and he wasted no time in feeling the kid out. He shot two punches for the tyro's head and missed with both. He caught a pretty right on the chin that spun him half-way around and stirred a roar from the crowd. For three minutes stunned fight-wise customers watched the youngster box Lasking into a state of ludicrous bewilderment. Poole shot a remark at Smokey that was full of conviction.

"The guy who taught the kid to box must've been a wow. He boxes like Corbett and hits like Fitz."

"Yassuh, boss. Laskin' sho is havin' fitz right now," hollered Smokey enthusiastically.

The fight was to go but four rounds. Bat Lasking gasped to his handlers: "He's got everything. I'm goin' to stay the limit—that's all." But Lasking was wrong. In the third, he covered himself for a whistling right that did not land. Instead, a left sank deep into his stomach and paralyzed him. He was counted out, sitting on the canvas, his brain as clear as a bell.

"I can't believe it," a toughened boxing writer said to Al Poole. "That guy's a perfect fighter right now. He could be champ in a year."

"Oh yeah? Well, some mugs would try that, but I'm givin' the kid plenty of time. All the time he wants. We'll work through the crop of good middleweights one by one, Bill. Maybe a light heavy or two."

THE boxing world began to talk of nobody but Packy Strange. The middleweight champion felt the scalp under his diadem lift a bit every time Al Poole's natural walked another step up the stairs of the division.

Packy did not get a top spot on a card until eight months after Al Poole had first touched him on the arm in front of Kellman's Gym. When he did come out for the main event with a rugged veteran by the name of Young Jack O'Brien, the big Brooklyn crowd let out a howl that could be heard clear to Gotham's famous, brightly lit stem. Boxing writers knew that this was the acid test for Poole's phenom and they bent industriously over their typewriters to pound out a resumé of the preliminaries.

Ten rows back from them sat two tense-faced men. One had an ear scrambled out of shape, and there was a dent on the bridge of his nose big enough to have been left by a crowbar. His companion was about Packy Strange's age. There was a mole on his right cheek. His hat was tilted back on his head, and the patch of dark hair that was revealed seemed

polished. Staring at Packy, his eyes flickered with an old light that had not burned there for several years.

The light faded swiftly, however, when the man with him said: "He looks like the real McCoy, Kayne. The title don't look so close any more."

Phil Kayne, once Vince Darrell, foundling, grinned mirthlessly. With the smile a lot of the weakness of his early character became apparent around his mouth. "No? Don't forget he's an old pal of mine."

The bell clanged. O'Brien came out cautiously, sparred a few moments with Strange and then drove in. His left stabbed at the air. His right arched over and thudded against Packy Strange's shoulder as the younger fighter drew away.

Then Packy was in, sending that hard left home to O'Brien's mid-section three times in close. The ring-siders could hear Young Jack's painful grunts as he fought to tie the kid up. The ref tore them loose from a clinch near the ropes, and O'Brien stepped back, striving to figure the hard-smashing youngster's style. He thought he had it just before the bell. Fifteen seconds later when he was being revived in his corner he knew he was wrong.

Boxing writers hammered away furiously at their machines. They wrote of that murderous left which had paralyzed Young Jack O'Brien. Of the right that had sent him into dreamland before the first stanza was over. Phil Kayne's face was pale when he rose to follow the crowd toward the ring. His fighter, the leading middle-weight contender, one Georgie Yarov, made a husky comment.

"He's a hitter, Kayne. We'll never git past him."

"I knew he'd be a beaut if he ever went into the ring," Kayne replied, "but he's a tough guy, Georgie. He's sour at the world. He's no Sir Galahad. I think I'll go down and mitt him. I might as well break the ice now."

PHIL KAYNE shouldered his way among the writers in Packy's dressing room to where the crack middleweight was sitting on a rubbing table. The one-time Vince Darrell's nostrils twitched at the stale odors of liniment and sweat as he went up to his old friend.

"Hello, Packy," he said, holding out his hand.

Al Poole's fighter slid off the table, his eyes boring into the stranger's face. The features shrunk away, the years evaporated, and Packy Strange saw only the face of Vince Darrell.

"Vince," he exclaimed, "it's sure good to see you. I heard you were in the fight racket. Have a share of Georgie Yarov, haven't you? You're looking swell, Vince."

"Phil Kayne is the name, Packy." Something appeared in the speaker's eyes that bothered young Strange. The timbre of that voice was not pleasant to his ears.

Al Poole's fighter hastened to apologize. "Sorry. I forgot."

"I'd like to have a talk with you, Packy," Kayne said then. "I'd like to have you meet my mother."

"I'd like to," responded Packy. He felt a twisting sensation deep down inside of him, however, when the young man who had been his pal, walked away.

When Poole and he were alone, Al said: "I've heard the story, Packy. When a kid grows up to be a man, he changes a lot. Don't forget to watch his hands, kid. Don't forget to duck when you see him."

"Oh, he was always a little scary," Packy said. "That was all, Al. I don't think Vince ever had any real harm in him."

"Well, just watch your step, that's all, Packy," Al advised him. "I hear you've got a heart as big as all outdoors. Sometimes it ain't good for a guy. Remember—when you fight Yarov it might mean the middleweight crown. The Champ's liable to quit any time."

It was a week later that Packy Strange was introduced to Mrs. Kayne by her son, Phil. The woman was prematurely gray and there were lines of sorrow on her face. At sight of the woman whom all her boarders called "Ma Kayne," Packy felt a hunger inside of him. He thought that hers was one of the sweetest, kindest faces he had ever seen. In a wordless silence, he stared at her foolishly, clasping her small, work-hardened hand in his big right mauler. She smiled up at him understandingly.

Packy finally found courage to say: "You're twice as nice as I thought you were, Ma'am. Vince — Phil — was lucky to find you."

Mrs. Marty Kayne seemed to blink a shadow away as it swept across her face. "Phil has told me about you, Tom. Tom Strange—that's it, isn't it?"

The fighter nodded. "A foundling has to take any name he gets. Vince — Phil—and I used to be jealous of the orphans who had their own names and knew about their families. He was certainly lucky to find his."

Mrs. Kayne smiled and looked toward her son fondly. Before she could speak again a girl came into the room. Phil put his arm around her possessively, but there was an air of withdrawal about her that she covered with effort when Mrs. Kayne looked at her.

Phil introduced the girl. "This is Midge, Packy—Mildred Terrill. She's one of the family already and don't say she's not an eyeful! Look out for him, Midge. He's a tough guy. Just out of reform—"

"Phil!" Mrs. Kayne reproached her son.

A MOMENTARY blaze flared in Packy Strange's eyes, but he forced a laugh. The girl tried to tell him with her eyes that it was all right with her, and the brief tenseness about Packy relaxed. He realized then that Phil had had a nip too much.

"Come on, Packy," Phil said then,

drawing away from Midge Terrill, "we have a lot to talk about—old times and all."

As the two young men climbed the stairs to an upper story of Ma Kayne's boarding house, the white-haired woman followed them with her eyes until they were gone. When Midge spoke to her in a hollow voice, she looked around with worried lines furrowing her forehead.

"Phil shouldn't have said that, Ma Kayne. It hurt the poor fellow terribly. He's real nice, too—not tough at all."

"He's a fighter," Ma Kayne said in a voice that was vibrant with a vague terror. "Marty—my husband—was like him once. Fresh and clean and unmarked—handsome—until—"

The girl walked over and laid a comforting hand on the older woman's arm. "Please, Ma, try to forget. What is done can't be undone, you know."

"No-no," Ma Kayne admitted reluctantly. "Sometimes I wonder what it was all for." She left the room then, her step a little unsteady.

Upstairs Phil Kayne was asking Packy to have a drink. The fighter shook his head. "No thanks. Better keep off it, too, Vince."

"Quit calling me that," young Kayne said testily. "That's old."

"Yeah, I keep forgetting. Sorry. What's on your mind, Phil?" He could gather that his old friend did not want to discuss their past and he wondered what else they had to talk about before their renewed friendship found a region of common interest. As Phil floundered around in search of conversation, Packy became more puzzled. But a bad taste began to develop in his mouth when Phil finally came to the point.

"I—I—er—I don't know how to say it, Packy, but I guess I want you to kind of help me out again. It's about Yarov. I've been planning a lot on his shot at the crown. I figured he would have to fight Leo Norris for the shot at Duster Eagan, but it'll have to be you now. The fight fans will yell for

you to battele Yarov, and I've got a big piece of him."

"Go on," Packy gritted.

"It's not for me, Packy," Phil Kayne hastened on. "It's for Ma. I've got to have five grand bad, and I don't get it unless Yarov takes the winner's purse. I was thinkin' maybe you'd—for old time's sake—"

"I get it," Packy snarled. "you want me to cross Al Poole. Well, I'm not that kind, Vince Darrell. I went to bat for you a long time ago—more than once. I put you where you are today and took a rap—that rap you mentioned to that girl downstairs. And, by the way, that was pretty rotten of you, Vince."

"Oh, now listen, Packy, I let it out before I thought," Phil said easily. "Ma's in a jam. They're going to toss her out of here if I can't raise—"

Packy's anger cooled a little. "You haven't finished, Vince."

"Don't call me that, Packy!"

"Maybe you're the reason why she's broke, spending all her dough to keep you out of the fight racket, because it smells to heaven as far as she's concerned."

"But I wanted to make real dough, Packy. It's in the fight business, not in college."

Packy nodded and grimaced.

"You could drop a decision to Yarov," young Kayne pointed out, "then you'd get another crack at him and beat him. It wouldn't set you back a lot, Packy."

"I wouldn't do it for you, Phil. I don't like what I see in you. I wonder if it was worth my taking the rap for the job you and Perelli pulled. I don't think I did that fine woman downstairs much of a favor when I sent you to her. For her sake I'll think it over, Phil."

"I knew you'd go to bat for me, Packy," Kayne said eagerly. "It's the last thing I'll ever ask of you. It'll mean a lot to Midge, too. She and I—"

Packy Strange did not wait for the sentence to be finished. He was think-

ing of what he had missed in the world as he walked slowly downstairs. Mildred Terrill stood up to show him to the door and Packy said: "It's been a pleasure to meet you, Miss Terrill. Please tell Ma Kayne she needn't worry."

"No?" queried the girl. "So he's in another jam! What has he done now, Mr. Strange?"

"Another jam?" Packy repeated. "I don't understand."

"Yes, another," she said bitterly. "He's been in dozens of them. He's breaking the poor woman's heart. He won't work. Drinks a lot. I wish—I'd never come to this place!" Tears filled the girl's eyes.

"Look as if I'm—kind of responsible—for things," Packy said slowly. "I'll—try to square things with Ma Kayne. I sent him back to her. I used to love that kid! Vince Darrell was so timid." He shook his head and went out.

MILDRED TERRILL stood in the doorway looking after him. Her heart was a dead weight inside of her, and she wondered why Ma Kayne's son could not have been a real man like Packy Strange. Yet poor Ma had such a hatred of fighting, she never would have wanted her son to be a boxer. The girl shook her head and turned to climb the stairs.

An hour later, Phil Kayne was called to the telephone. Packy's voice greeted him. "I've thought it over, Vince. You can count on the winner's end if I fight Georgie Yarov. That'll fix everything all right."

"That's great, Packy," exclaimed Phil. "Ma'll never stop thanking you." He hung up the receiver, face split with a grin. "And he was going to be a tough guy! Hah, he'll do anythin' for me."

In the store from where he had called the Kayne home, Packy Strange sat staring absently at the bare wall. He thought back over the years and the memories hurt him. Spike Jordan had said once: "When you start out

to do somethin', kid, finish it. You've got to see things straight through." Well, Packy Strange had started something in a juvenile court many years ago. It had caught up with him again, and he had found it unfinished.

He wished he could think of Phil Kayne as a man instead of Vince Darrell, the scared little orphan boy. And another pair of eyes was going to haunt him for a long time. Packy regretted that he had caught a glimpse of life beyond the ropes of the prize ring. He never would have known what he was missing if that had not happened.

A week later Packy Strange signed to meet Georgie Yarov in the New York Garden. Three days after Packy had started training for the battle, Duster Eagan, the middleweight champ, quit his throne. Eagan told the boxing writers that it was almost impossible to keep the weight limit any longer. His plans were indefinite and he was not worrying. He had a sizable lump of ring earnings left. The newspapers and the billboards came out with the announcement that the Strange-Yarov fight would be for the middleweight championship of the world.

A week before the big go Packy Strange met Mildred Terrill coming out of a theatre on Broadway. He waited to see if she would speak to him. The girl not only spoke but smiled with a degree of friendliness that made Packy's heart bang against his ribs.

"Hello, Mr. Strange," she said. "Why haven't we seen you around Ma Kayne's?"

"Somehow I—I couldn't," the fighter said shyly and, as was his habit when a trifle embarrassed, he dug his finger into his collar which was far from being tight. "Somehow I keep thinking how she feels about prize fighters and—well, you know," he ended lamely.

"A fighter can be a gentleman, too," the girl said gently. "He should

be a really good fighter or give up fighting. Now *you* look like anything but a man who earns his living with boxing gloves. I hope you will always look that way."

"T-thanks," faltered the young boxer. "How's Phil?" he asked then, to hide his confusion.

"He hasn't been home very much since you were there," she replied, her brows drawing together. "I'm so sorry for Ma Kayne—she expected so much of her son. Too much, I guess."

"She had a right to," Packy gritted. "His father was quite a man. I—I'm sorry. I thought you and Phil—?"

The girl colored, and her red lips firmed. She said: "Things—change."

The fighter thought of the boy, Vince Darrell, who had grown up into the man, Phil Kayne. He guessed that some things do not change, but he didn't contradict Midge Terrill.

"I'm on my way to the hotel," he explained. "Al Poole sent for me in a hurry. Something must be on his mind."

"Good luck," the girl said cheerfully and went on her way.

AL POOLE'S face was a little drawn when Packy walked into the small apartment they shared. The manager dropped a newspaper he had been reading. There were three glasses on a tray near his elbow.

"Had visitors?" queried Packy.

"Yeah. I don't like what they told me. They get around a lot, kid. I don't like what the papers say either."

"What do they say, Al?"

"That heavy dough is coming into town, and the boys who carry it are not very dumb, Packy. They don't gamble with that kind of sugar unless they're sure of something. They're trying to get it covered with Strange currency. Does that mean anything to you?"

Packy tried to keep his glance steady but he had never had a poker face. "Looks like they figure Yarov will take me," he replied.

"Yeah, but maybe there's another reason, Packy," Poole said seriously. "Phil Kayne has a slice of Yarov. The guy is a fast stepper and he always needs dough. Have you been talkin' with Kayne?"

"Some," Packy admitted, biting his lip. "We've known each other from years back."

"I know the story," the manager nodded. "It's quite a heart throb and all that, kid. Maybe I understand a lot about kids who spent a lot of time together in an orphan asylum. I'm not going to tell you that I brought you to where you are and you owe me your life. You don't. That guy Spike Jordan that you told me about taught you all you know. You were born with the tools of your trade in your arms. All I want to say to you is that I believe you're square, kid, and I'd hate like hell to be wrong about it. That's all, Packy. The title don't mean as much as my faith in you."

Packy banged a clenched fist into the palm of his other hand and looked at the floor. "I talked with Kayne, Al. He wants part of the winner's purse on that title go. He said I could lose a decision and get another crack at his fighter later. I won't tell you any more. I'll let the fight speak for itself." He was silent awhile. "Funny how you get soft about a kid who's dead, isn't it, Al?"

The manager said: "Yeah, Packy, we'll see."

The odds dropped from four-to-one to five-to-three on Packy Strange the night of the fight. At the weighing in, the boxing experts looked with jaundiced eyes at young Strange when he stepped onto the scales. He had a big patch of adhesive over his left eye that had caused Al Poole to suck in his breath sharply half an hour before. He could not remember any sparring partner breaking the skin on his middleweight's face.

"What's the answer, Al?" a fight authority tossed at Packy's manager when he went out. "There's a lot of ugly rumors around."

"What do you expect to hear in an alley—Grand Opera?" the pilot clipped. He pressed through the crowds outside the building where the fighters had weighed in.

Twenty-four thousand customers had banged through the turnstiles by eight-thirty. They suffered through four preliminary fights and cast their eyes on their watches frequently. The main attraction was due to start at NINE: FORTY-FIVE. With the semi-final still in full swing, fans outside the doors were fighting to buy or steal standing room. Geared high for the big go, Packy Strange was shaking hands with Phil Kayne in the dressing room. The young man's hand felt a little clammy to the middleweight, but there was an exultant gleam in Kayne's eyes that did not escape Packy's notice.

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"Tell Ma Kayne that we bring home the bacon," he said, studying Phil's expression keenly.

"May the best man win, Packy," replied Phil. He hurried out to where Yarov was having trouble with his bandages.

"I didn't like the crack you made," Al Poole said then.

"Keep your shirt on, Al," young Strange grinned. "A lot of guys could clean up tonight, couldn't they, Al?"

"That's what I mean!"

Smokey placed Packy's robes around him and took a last look at the fighter's hands. "Reckon yo'all is set, champ," he beamed, revealing a set of ivories like piano keys. "Ain' nuffin' lef' 'cept countin' our chickens."

THE full-throated roar that welcomed Packy Strange to the arena broke and ran along the rafters to the exits where it burst forth to the ears of the crowd out in the Avenue. As he got near to the ring and reached up to grab a rope a heavy-set, white-haired ringsider eyed him appraisingly. Al Poole, just behind Packy, saw the observer and let loose an ejaculation of surprise.

"Andy, you old fox," he cried. "Haven't seen you in years, you old son-of-a-gun. Who do you like?"

"Your boy," replied the old time manager and trainer. "Who wouldn't, Al? I've come halfway around the world to be here so I could look at him. Once I had a battler who looked like Strange. It's like old times to see the kid work."

Al nodded appreciatively and climbed after Packy into the ring. Cameramen and handlers were crowding each other. The announcer waved his arms imperatively in an effort to quiet the throngs of fans. Time dragged for Packy Strange during the introduction of boxing luminaries, past and present.

His thoughts flitted for a moment to Midge Terrill. Would she listen in? Three rows back from the press row he discerned Phil Kayne. He evaded

the young man's eyes. Three or four men were in Phil's party, flashy gentry whose complexions betrayed unfamiliarity with the sun.

At last the ring was clear save for the referee and the leather-lunged announcer. "I wish they'd step on it," Packy thought.

A boxing writer ducked his head to a fellow scribe's ear. "It won't be long before we find out now. If he doesn't take Yarov—"

"Al would be the first to turn him up if he's a phony," was the reply.

The warning buzzer brought comparative quiet to the howling gallery. The ref called Packy Strange out to shake hands with Yarov and to receive instructions. That over, the spectators tightened their fists and waited. The arc lights seemed to blaze more brightly with only the ref standing under them waiting for the bell.

It sounded.

Packy Strange glided across the canvas, a set smile on his handsome features. Yarov grinned knowingly and shot a light left in. Packy flicked it aside and smashed a stinging right hand against Georgie's nose. Snarling, the Pole backstepped and ground out something that his adversary could not quite hear. He circled, red gloves pawing restlessly, then leaped in, grazing Packy's cheek with a right. Young Strange drove forward and shot that terrible left of his into Yarov's stomach. The Polish fighter winced, had no time to get his dropped guard back up before a right shook his brain and sent him toward the ropes.

The fans went crazy when blood trickled from Yarov's chin. The Pole's manager was becoming pasty white, and his eyes held a beseeching look of interrogation.

Thirty seconds before the bell, Packy Strange dropped Yarov to one knee, and the ref's arm went up. In the midst of the bedlam the Polish boy got up and tore into a clinch. The bell rang, ending the round.

Al Poole said excitedly to his fighter: "I'm sorry for what I've been thinkin', kid. That was pretty work out there. Smokey, look after him right."

"Lak a baby, Mistuh Poole, lak a baby, yassuh!"

GEORGIE YAROV was no set-up. He had what the ring wiseacres label "moxie." He could take plenty and dish it out. For two rounds he kept crowding Packy in close, getting in a lot of hard smashes. Once his right staggered Al Poole's flash and put him aboard a bicycle until the ringing had gone out of his ears.

But Packy Strange was thinking far ahead of the more sluggish-brained Yarov. The Pole was aiming high, trying to knock that adhesive tape loose. He thought that there was a cut under it. Spike Jordan had known a lot of tricks. Yarov was setting a fast pace for a fifteen-round fight, and he would have to put himself under wraps before long to keep his wind for that distance.

At the end of the fourth, Packy said to his handler: "He hit me hard, Smokey. I never was hit harder, but he hasn't got quite enough. I'll take him before long."

Phil Kayne was sitting back in his seat, feeling a little easier in mind during the sixth round. Yarov was getting in a lot of punches that would count on the judge's scorecards. Perhaps Packy was making things look good to cover everything up. Unmarked, Packy Strange was moving around the ring nimbly, his non-chalance reminding the customers of Jack Delaney, the Canuck, who used to go ten heats without disturbing a hair.

The fans were yelling for the action that had marked the first two rounds, and Yarov suddenly decided to give them a little. He sneaked in under Packy's guard and brought up a right uppercut that missed by half an inch. Packy leaped to life and cracked a left to the Pole's nose. Another left.

A right. Another hard right. Yarov gave ground, and his knees were rubbery at the bell.

The spectators went wild during the rest period. Yarov looked toward Phil Kayne after the handlers had washed the gore from half a dozen cuts on his face. The Pole's teeth were bared as he came out of his corner at the bell. He ripped at Strange: "Dirty double-crosser!"

Packy stalked him around the ring, and the men at the ringside would have given a lot to hear what he was saying to Yarov. They could see his lips form words. There was killer light in Packy Strange's eyes now. What he was saying to Yarov was: "This is the round, Yarov. There ain't any double-cross. Not at all."

With half a round to go Yarov, realizing that he was being battered down slowly, rushed in to try for a lucky lethal punch. Ringsiders groaned when young Strange straightened to meet the onslaught. Al Poole groaned, too, holding his breath the next minute. What was happening up there? Packy had not only straightened. His right was swinging savagely for Yarov's jaw. In the front row, the white-haired man, whom Poole had called "Andy," rose up in his seat, and the years tumbled away from him. He remembered another day—

Yarov's guard went up to block the blow, the blow that left Packy wide open. The Pole grinned as he blocked with his left and sent a murderous right to Strange's jaw. But the jaw was not there to meet the sudden glove. Andy Moore was yelling as loud as his old lungs would allow. He seemed to know what was going to happen.

Working with precision, Packy Strange swung for Yarov's jaw with his own right. At the same time he brought his right foot and the right side of his body forward. In mid-flight he checked his swinging right and shot a terrific left across to Yarov's unguarded mid-section. Reinforced by his braced body, the left

drove into the Pole with the force of three good right hands. The solar plexus punch that Fitz had made famous, a paralyzing punch that left the recipient stricken—open-eyed.

PACKY walked away from the Pole to a neutral corner. The crowd was straining its vocal chords by yelling until the building trembled. Yarov twisted and writhed and rolled on the canvas, paralyzed from the terrific body blow that had momentarily destroyed communication between his brain and his muscles.

Phil Kayne stood up in his seat, lips quivering, fear and red rage fighting for mastery in his eyes. A man shoved him back into his seat and snarled: "Yeah, you knew how t' fix things—ya!"

White-haired Andy Moore was one of the first to climb into the ring to get near Packy Strange, the new middleweight champ. It was hard to make himself heard above the massed yells of joy that were going up from Al Poole, Smokey, and the other handlers. Finally, Andy took him by the arm and seized Packy with the other.

"This is Andy Moore, kid," Poole shouted joyously. "He used to handle champs. He wants to ask you something."

"Yeah," the old timer forced out, "there's only one other man who ever fought like you—who could work that punch so fast. His name was Marty Kayne. I used to handle him. You must've been born with the savvy for that punch, kid. Who taught you that—that 'portside sleeper?' Who did, kid?"

Packy and his retinue had a hard time ploughing through the hysterical mobs to the dressing room. Andy Moore, fighting the mob, got close to Packy. He tugged at his arm. "Kid, I asked you—"

Packy said: "Oh yeah! His name was—Spike Jordan. Up at the reformatory at—" Andy Moore was swallowed up in the singing mob. All during his massage and shower and

while climbing into his clothes, Packy kept thinking about what the white-haired man had shouted so wildly. The last newspaper man was gone when Phil Kayne came into the champ's dressing room. His eyes were red-rimmed. Smokey was on the point of throwing him out when Packy, fully dressed, intervened.

"Let him alone, Smokey. Al, you watch the door and don't let anybody in."

"Pulled a fast one, didn't you?" Phil sneered nervously.

"Hold on," Packy said evenly. "I agreed that Ma Kayne would get a cut of the winner's purse, didn't I? Well, I'm the winner and I'm going to put five thousand in her hands. Is that a double-cross?"

Kayne's jaw dropped. "No, n-no, Packy," he said huskily. "Sure, give it to me, Packy, an' I'll take it right out to her. I—I was all wrong. I didn't think of it that way."

"No, Vince," Packy said quietly. "I'm going to give it to her myself. I'll be seein' you there tomorrow."

"Listen, Packy," Phil Kayne pleaded, his face losing the last vestige of color, "I got to give it to her. She's my mother. I said I'd get it for her. She wouldn't take it from anybody else. She—"

Young Strange smiled significantly. He was sure now of something. He had to fight with himself to keep from delivering a right to Kayne's jaw. "Beat it," he snapped. "I need some rest. Beat it!"

Kayne looked at him dully for a moment, then reeled out. Al Poole laid a hand on Packy's shoulder. "Kid, I've got to hand it to you. You're aces all around. You ought to hang one on my chin."

THE papers next morning were interesting reading to Packy Strange. He read aloud to Al Poole: "Never, according to old-time boxing writers, did a fighter execute that deadly solar plexus blow with swifter or more deadly precision. Only two

other fighters, Fitz and Marty Kayne, ever—" Packy stopped reading, brows knitted as he looked at his manager. "But Spike Jordan taught me that. He said I caught on easy—"

"I don't get it, kid," his pilot replied. "It's all over my head."

The phone rang then, and they learned that newspaper men were downstairs. Al instructed the front office to tell them that the champ needed another hour of rest. After that they could come up. But before the hour was over a telegram came that changed the tenor of things for that day. As Poole read it, he turned a little white. Packy asked what had happened.

"Take a deep breath, kid, and get set for a stiff punch," the fight pilot replied. He read aloud: "Spike Jordan is Marty Kayne. Stop. Am wiring your mother. Stop. Advise you bring her Warrensburg Hospital. Andy Moore."

"Gee, Al," Packy said in a choked voice. "I can't believe it. Spike my—and I never knew. Wonder what happened? And Ma Kayne my mother? But Vince—the other Phil. Al, I've got to get out of here. Stall the newspaper boys. Hurry and help me pack a couple of things. I'll make it out the back way."

"Sure, kid, sure," Al gasped. "And they say miracles don't—"

Packy Strange slipped out of the hotel unseen and took a taxi to Ma Kayne's boarding house. At the door, Mildred Terrill looked at him with her eyes as big as saucers.

"Where is she, Midge?" Packy asked eagerly.

"Upstairs getting ready, Packy. Oh, isn't it wonderful? Somehow she thought the other day that you—"

"Vince? I mean Phil—where is he?"

"Ma sent him away last night, Packy. I guess he was glad to go. There were a couple of tough-looking customers looking for him. I threatened to call the police if they didn't leave—they said something about a

double-cross. Ma called me from the office awhile ago. She says it was meant to be—her losing that locket. She knew all the time that Phil—Vince—wasn't her son, but she says he looked so desperate that time when they were about to take him away that she took pity on him. She thought of the son she had to desert and decided that maybe she could square things by being kind to some one else's boy."

"So that was it? Midge, tell her I'm here, will you? I can hardly wait," Packy said anxiously, breathlessly. "Somehow when I looked at her the other day I felt kind of funny, Midge. I've got the money for her—Vince said she needed it badly to save this place. She'll never need anything any more."

"She didn't need money," the girl said. "She was making out all right—breaking even, anyway. Phil needed it for himself, I guess."

There was a hesitant step on the stairway. Packy looked up and saw his mother and he ran up to meet her. "My boy," she murmured happily. "Everything's all right, Phil. I thought—some day—you'd come back. And to think you—found Marty—your father, Phil! That locket—the sacrifice you made for some one you loved—it led you straight to us." Packy hugged her to him and walked down the stairs with his arm around her.

"Ma, you'll miss your train," Midge said quietly. The girl's eyes were swimming as she helped the fragile little woman into her coat and hat. "I'm—so glad for both of you, Ma."

On the way out Packy said: "We'll be seein' you, Midge!"

FOUR days later Marty Kayne awoke from the shadows. A bone had been pressing against his brain for many years—ever since the night when his head had hit the canvas of the tank town ring. When he opened his eyes on a new world, he mumbled: "Seconds run out on me. Yeah—a has-been. Well, I'll get that hundred

bucks. Got to get back to Jo—my legs—I can't—" Marty Kayne stared wildly around him, looking from one teary face to another. Then his eyes rested on the person nearest to him. "Jo?" he mumbled. "You look like Jo—but she didn't have white hair. Where—am—I? In bed? Who—"

"It's all right, Marty," Jo Kayne said gently, nestling her cheek against his. "We've grown old—both of us. You've been away a long time, Marty, but you've come back. Here's Phil, your son, Marty. The middleweight champion of the world!" There was a proud ring to her voice.

A tired smile bisected the old fighter's face. He drew his family close. For a while, no one spoke. Then Marty broke the silence. "Seems to me I remember that you didn't want little Phil to grow up to be a fighter, Jo?"

"The fight game took you and Phil from me, Marty," Ma Kayne said gently, "but it gave you both back to me. That evens things up, doesn't it, Marty?"

"Guess it does, Jo. He'd have to be our son, Jo—there couldn't be a mistake?"

"No," the white-haired woman smiled. "I've got a footprint of Phil when he was a baby. They're just like fingerprints, Marty—no two alike, they say. If we need any more proof, dear, well—"

Andy Moore said stoutly: "I don't need any!" He touched Phil on the arm. "We'll be goin' back to town.

Your Ma can stay until Marty's able to come home with her."

Packy Kayne gripped his father's arm. "Be seein' you, Dad. I'm going to look up a house in the country that has a big flower garden with it. Maybe I'll look up a couple of 'em. I'll let you know when you come home. G'bye, Ma."

Back in the big town, the young fighter walked up the steps of Ma Kayne's boarding house with his heart beating wildly. He went in without ringing and called out: "Midge!"

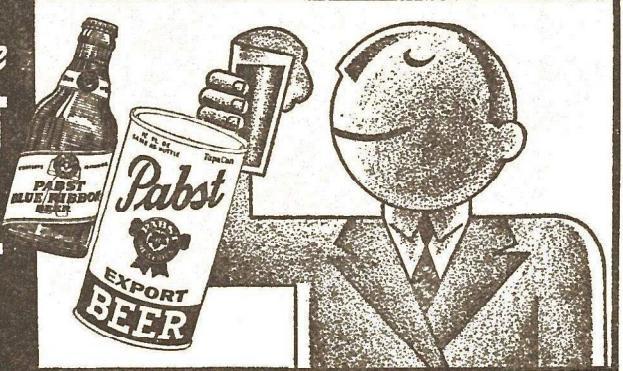
The girl, wearing a party dress that made the young man's head swim, came hurrying down the stairs. "Packy," she exclaimed, "is everything all—"

The champ nodded. "Perfect. They're together now. He'll be home soon." Then he got set to deliver a punch, the blood pounding through his veins. "Midge—we—we haven't known each other long. But the way things have happened, it doesn't matter much how long people know—er—that is, I want you to marry me."

Midge Terrill kayoed the champ then. She said: "All right, Packy. I'd like that."

There was a silence in the hall for a few moments. Only when the warning buzzer sounded at the door did Packy let go of the girl. Then he laughed. "I've got to go out for a minute. Going to send a wire. Got to tell Ma and Pa that I'm buying two houses!"

So much more
ENJOYMENT
- WHEN YOU
SAY-PABST



Bag-Rat Frameup



By Ross Russell

Author of "Four Cylinder Suicide."

Branded a bag-rat boomer, the Weasel was fired by his caddy-master. And to save an obscure young pro from a framed defeat, Weasel determined to show that a rat was best equipped to ferret out phony gutta percha.

LUCK was with the Weasel. The obscure assistant pro he had drawn in the scramble for bags at the start of the Florida Match Play Open was going great guns. The name, which no one had ever heard of, was Johnny Mayhew; and the guy was really shooting the eyes out of them.

This Mayhew was assistant to the head pro on the home course, which to some was sufficient explanation of his sensational play. But the Weasel doubted that. You can't sweep through six big-shot professionals and into the semis of a major-links tourney on knowledge of terrain alone.

In any case the Weasel was thoroughly sold on his particular horse and was pulling very hard—though chiefly for mercenary reasons. It was nearly the end of the Florida season, and he was yet without a stake to head north. Every round meant another trey spot to line his ragged and empty pockets, and Johnny Mayhew had promised him a double-sawbuck bonus if they reached the finals.

Crook-backed under the burden of Mayhew's campaign trunk, the Weasel shooed goggling gallerites away from the ball and spread the clubs out fanwise for Mayhew's selection. Across the fairway their opponent was about to shoot the 17th.

That opponent was none other than the celebrated Wally Hogan, the greatest player since Vardon—maybe greater. Hogan had held every title that golfdom offered: P.G.A., Canadian Open, U. S. Open, the Western, the Met, the North-South, the British—every major title except the Florida Match Play—and the story was that he was out to add that to his string this year.

"Well," said the Weasel to himself, "this Hogan better get busy. He's barely square with us, and if he misses this green, he's a dead pigeon."

The Hoge was wagging a wood now. Weasel watched the swing and then squinted intensely into the dipping sun.

"There goes Hogan's spoon now," he murmured to Johnny Mayhew. "It's gonna hook sure, Mr. Mayhew. Look at 'er bend. It's way wide." The Weasel almost shouted: "It's in the soup!"

Johnny Mayhew's lean, brown hand hesitated on the wooden cleek. His

face was pinched from the strain of the week-long tournament. He scowled at the island of shaved bent surrounded by a lagoon of canvas-colored pools. There was a 200 yard carry left.

The Weasel pleaded: "Please don't play it safe, Mr. Mayhew. You'll tighten up, sure thing. Take the deuce iron, and gun it!"

The young assistant pro answered in a voice that was tight with emotion, "I guess you're right, Weasel," and reached for the club. He already had his stance. It was a shot he wanted to get over—the big pressure was on. Human nerves stand just so much.

MAYHEW'S fingers trembled as he grasped the leather. He was pale underneath his Florida sun tan. But the Weasel's respect dwindled not a whit. He had seen far greater names than the unhallowed Mayhew's crack when the big pressure went on.

Mayhew had his grip and his line now. The mid-iron blade slung back lazily, cocked fast and tight, came down at the ball in a glittering arc. Then, with the dynamic unleash of power, the gutta percha blurred off the spongy turf and soared up in an immense parabola towards the green.

The Weasel shaded his eyes against the sun, peering for any tell-tale trace of hook or fade. Up, out—straight as a string—on! Hogan would have to conjure up a miracle to stay even.

As the great internationalist waded into the sand, the Weasel crossed his fingers. Hogan was famous for miracles. The Weasel had been there that day when Hogan broke Leo Diegel's heart by calling a forty-five foot down-hill putt.

Hogan swung with a wedge. There was an explosion that flung up a wide fan of sand out of which materialized a white pellet that trickled towards the pin the Weasel held. Short—short by a dozen feet. . . .

Hogan tried to ram it; but the Weasel's fingers weren't crossed for

nothing. It broke off dizzily at the last. And Mayhew played out for a perfect par.

One up, one to go . . . Hold Hogan on the long 18th, and they were in the finals.

It was Hogan's weathered face that looked drawn now. The veteran shook it off with an easy smile. After all, the Florida Match Play Open was just another tournament to Hoge. But the sports writers had hoped Hogan would reach the finals.

For the other finalist, established that morning, was Joe Miata, Mayhew's boss. Joe Miata, in his six years as head pro at Sandy Point, had never once been defeated on his own course; and he had met and beaten some of the best in the business. Hogan, if anyone, was the man who might bring to an end that incredible record of invincibility.

There was a delay at the 18th tee while stewards battled with the frenzied gallery that swarmed over the fairway. It was a delay that boded no good for raw nerves. The Weasel wiped Mayhew's driver with a tattered sleeve, glanced about nervously.

Across the links he made out a foursome approaching the adjacent 8th green. Swagging into a sand trap was a bulky form—Joe Miata.

The invincible champion of Sandy Point, his semifinal match long since won, was loosening up for the finals—and getting paid handsomely for his trouble. In his foursome were a trio of vacationing suckers who considered it big stuff to get themselves fleeced by a famous pro.

The Weasel watched Miata play from the trap, take two putts for a five, and then saunter towards them. He was not a pleasant-appearing gentleman. He was dark as a thunder cloud, and he had a baleful eye.

Disregarding his assistant completely, he said to Wally Hogan in a voice that could not be called confidential: "Win this one, Wally, and he'll split wide open. Tough luck you lost the last hole."

Hogan was obviously embarrassed. "Not a bit," he answered Miata. "I played a dub shot, and Mayhew had a good one. To tell you the truth, Joe, I ought to be all washed up before now. That lad's a sweet shot-maker."

"Put the pressure on him here and find out," suggested Miata and returned to his suckers with a, "See you in the finals tomorrow morning, Hogan."

"He'll see us in the finals, tomorrow, that's what!" muttered the Weasel under his breath as he wiped Mayhew's driver again. The Weasel knew that things like this were no good for the nerves. "Right down the middle, Mr. Mayhew."

WALLY HOGAN shook all of his tricks out of the bag on that long, last hole. He played a magnificent third, a full cut shot that chewed turf from the very lip of the cup, to cinch a birdie four.

But Johnny Mayhew's tremendous hitting power managed, in spite of the jittery nerves that controlled the muscles, to cope with the veteran's skill. He slammed home with two rifling woods to birdie the easy, two-putt way, and the victory was in the bag, one up. Hogan's congratulations were warm and genuine.

"That fellow Miata," he told Mayhew, "seems to have it all his own way on this golf course. I had sort of hoped to make a try at his record myself. But, Mayhew, you were too tough. I only hope you don't ease tomorrow, even if Joe Miata is your boss."

Mayhew smiled and thanked the veteran and handed Weasel his putter. It was a wan smile, and the Weasel noticed that Mayhew's hand still trembled. He thought to himself: "Gee, it's all over now. He oughta be rid of the jitters. He's in the finals. That's plenty, for an unknown. And I get my double-sawbuck bonus!"

He sheathed the putter in the bag and stood about hopefully. Pros habitually paid off after the tourna-

ment—and Weasel was broke. He needed a couple of bucks for hotel and eat money.

But well-wishers and newshawks crowded in, so the Weasel decided not to intrude his own miserable troubles upon his hero's moment of triumph. He put the bag away and went down to thumb a ride into town. Maybe the hotel keeper and the Greek would trust him for another day.

In the parking lot the Weasel spotted a sunny blonde in a smart tan roadster he had been told belonged to Judy Tuttle, daughter of Sandy Point's chairman of the greens committee. He thought that he wouldn't mind riding in a car like that, or, for that matter, with a femme like that. But women never gave rides.

The blonde honked, and apparently at Weasel. He waited discreetly until she honked again. Then he went over.

"Are you Weasel?" she asked.

He told her he was.

"Then, you caddied for Johnny, Mr. Mayhew, today?"

"Yes, Miss—Tuttle."

"I'm afraid to ask you how the match finished. I was even afraid to watch, afraid Johnny might get nervous and lose."

"Gee, he was pretty nervous all right, but you sure missed something. We, I mean Mr. Mayhew, knocked old Wally Hogan in, one up, and we're in the finals tomorrow."

"Oh, Weasel, that's grand. Weasel, do you think Johnny has a chance—think he could possibly win tomorrow?"

"Well, they say Joe Miata has never lost on Sandy Point, Miss Tuttle. But, gosh, there isn't a guy alive that can win all the time in this game. Maybe you won't believe me, but I picked Goodman that day we beat Bobby Jones at Pebble Beach."

"Weasel, you don't know what it would mean. You see— Well, it's hardly important to you, I know, but my father made a rash bargain

once. He said Johnny and I could get married when Johnny won his first professional tournament. Which meant never, because, Weasel, Dad didn't think Johnny had it in him."

"By gosh, anybody that can knock Hogan in has got what it takes—I don't care if it was your old man that said so!"

"Weasel, why am I telling you all this?"

"I don't know, Miss Tuttle, but I'll 'fess up, too! I been pulling for Johnny because every round means more dough for a getaway stake. But now, so help me, I'm pulling harder than I ever pulled for a horse in my life—just so's your old man will have to keep his bargain. I don't know just how we're gonna bust Joe Miata's jinx tomorrow, but we're gonna, that's all!"

"That's wonderful of you Weasel. I'm sure you will be good luck for Johnny. Here, you need some money. Take this and tell Johnny I'm waiting for him."

The Weasel clenched his hands in empty pockets and protested that he did not need the proffered five spot. It was against his principles to accept money from women under any circumstances. He said good night hastily and ran off towards the clubhouse.

AFTER the Weasel had found Johnny Mayhew and told him that his light of love waited in the tan roadster, he went down towards the shop. He didn't know what he was going to find out or how, but he did know that something bore investigation.

As he swung around the corner near the golf shop, he nearly bumped into two men comparing score cards. One was big Joe Miata; the other, a pompous, middleaged man in tweeds.

The Weasel circled past them and heard Joe Miata say to the other: "Well, Tuttle, that brings us to the eighth hole. We're all square so far. You get a stroke there."

"Correct. I had a five. I see your score isn't entered as yet. What did you take on the eighth, Joe?"

The Weasel listened hard at that. He remembered seeing Miata play the eighth.

Miata's reply came without hesitation or tremor. "Birdie three, Tuttle. Sorry. And I win the ninth, so I guess that beats you again."

"Hang it all, Joe, I thought I had you sure this time. You're too good, way too good, Joe. But, I guess that's why we pay you five thousand a year to stay at Sandy Point. Oh well, some days you can't lay by a dollar—"

The Weasel didn't know what possessed him to butt in. Perhaps it was the sight of Joe Miata greedily accepting the one hundred dollars in twenties that Tuttle extracted from a plump wallet. Anyway, he found himself wheeling on Miata, saying:

"Wait a minute! I saw Joe Miata play the eighth this afternoon. He didn't have any three, either. He had a five, that's what!"

"Eh?" asked Tuttle.

"Mr. Tuttle, I saw Joe Miata play that hole. I was packing Johnny Mayhew and we were on the next fairway over. Joe Miata had a great big bogey five, and if you got a stroke, you won the hole and the bet."

"Joe, what is this lad talking about?"

"A. C.," replied Miata sleepily, "if you had rather accept the word of a roving caddy over my own, well—" He laughed and made a gesture to return Tuttle's money.

"No, no, of course, not. Only —"

"A. C., since there's a doubt in your mind, I insist we settle this little matter to your satisfaction." The big pro called into the shop: "Whitey!" In a moment the caddy-master, who had carried for Miata that day, shambled out. Miata moved forward to intercept him.

"Whitey," he said quickly. "We are having a little disagreement here, and we would like to have you verify something. You were along when I

played the eighth hole this afternoon. What did I take on the eighth? Remember now?"

LOOSE-JAWED, Whitey studied the ground. "The eighth," he parrotted. "The eighth? Oh, yeah, I remember now, Joe."

"That's fine," prompted Miata. "Tell Mr. Tuttle, please."

"Sure, Mr. Tuttle, Joe made a boid on the eighth—a boid three. I remember I tolle him the putt broke off a little to the right and—"

"That's all, Whitey, much obliged. A. C., is there anything else I can do to clear up this unpleasant little matter?"

"Joe, sorry I ever doubted your word. Who is this kid anyhow?"

The Weasel felt the wrath of Tuttle's downward gaze, and he felt sorrier for Johnny Mayhew than he did for himself. He heard Miata say:

"One of the boomer caddies that floats into Florida every winter. Whitey gave him a chance to pack because we were short. He's one of the roving, shiftless herd of bag rats that follows the big tournaments, wolfin' bags, stealing balls, and chiseling eat money."

"Indeed! We can quite do without his ilk at Sandy Point. Have him shown summarily from the premises."

"Whitey, kick this bag rat off the property. Be careful who you hire in the future, hear?"

"You can't do that," yelled the Weasel. "I'm packing tomorra!"

"Dat's wat youse tink!" interrupted Whitey, seizing the Weasel in long arms.

"I tell ya—"

Whitey's grimy hand clapped over the Weasel's mouth. Whitey's long arms clamped the Weasel's shoulders. Joe Miata supplied forward impetus down the driveway with a kick from a cleated boot. The Weasel struggled, but Whitey was too large. His feet only dug futilely at the gravel surface. As he fought a losing battle, he heard Miata saying:

"A. C., I do feel bad about trimming you so often. But you can get that dough back tomorrow easy. Just because this assistant of mine trimmed Wally Hogan, they'll play him up big. The odds should be reasonable. Find a few suckers and plank your dough down on me, see?"

"Joe, you must admit Johnny Mayhew is playing mighty sensational golf. For personal reasons, I should be somewhat put out if he won tomorrow. Do you think you can beat him all right?"

"A. C., ever see me lose at Sandy Point?"

"No."

"I can't. I have the Indian sign on this golf course, A. C."

That was the last the Weasel heard, but it was quite enough.

After the Weasel had been "summarily shown from the premises" of the Sandy Point Golf and Country Club, he made only a show of starting down the highway. Once out of the caddymaster's sight, he cut into the brush and back-tracked towards the clubhouse. Off to the right a rut road led towards the barn and the Weasel made out a large blot moving through the darkness. The rolling, swaggering gait made it Joe Miata.

The Weasel approached the barn as Miata entered. He found himself a window and peered through spider webs to the interior. What he saw caused him to arch his sun-bleached eyebrows.

Within were three men: Miata, and two others who looked like fishermen. They wore rubber coats and rubber hip-boots, but they were familiar figures to the Weasel—night watermen.

Joe Miata lit a lantern. Then he took two sheets of paper from a pocket and spread them on the work bench. Miata talked, and the watermen listened. When Miata finished each took one of the papers. Then all three left, Miata for the club-

house, and the watermen, with their burdens of hose and sprinklers, for the fairways.

The Weasel knew that some skullduggery was afoot, but he did not comprehend the details as yet. He had been around golf courses for most of his life, but he couldn't figure Miata's scheme. All he knew was that he had to get hold of those mysterious sheets of paper.

To get hold of the first, required a long time—five hours perhaps. Five hours of stealthy shadowing among the patterns of pale light and somber black that laced the moon-soaked links.

Then there remained the second mysterious sheet; and that seemed even harder to obtain. It was already growing light in the east when the Weasel reached for the second sheet.

He seized it eagerly—too eagerly, he realized in a flash of intuition as the light in the east suddenly went out—with the black weight that dropped on his head from behind.

Consciousness was a long time returning to the Weasel, and when it did, it brought the diamond-hard light of day stinging the Weasel's incredibly leaden eyelids, flooding his foggy brain. Daylight—and of the day that Johnny Mayhew met the unbeatable one, Joe Miata, louse and caddy kicker. The Weasel thought he had the secret of that invincibility now.

He fought the weariness and dull, throbbing pain, got his eyes open—and started. For the position of the Florida midwinter sun told such an experienced sleeper-outer as the Weasel. Yes, no doubt it was past one! And the 36-hole final was to have started at 9 A. M.

Then a golden haze as dazzling as the sun itself blotted that body from view, and the Weasel discovered that Judy Tuttle was trying to rouse him. In fact, that explained why he had come to at all.

Her eyes were very wide and blue and tearfully anxious. She took a very small lace handkerchief from the pocket of a tailored gray suit and dabbed at Weasel's head. She wanted to know how badly he was hurt and whatever had happened.

"I've been looking for you for almost an hour," she told him. "You didn't show up this morning. Then you weren't there at noon either. We've got to get you to a hospital, Weasel."

The Weasel sat bolt upright and hastily pulled off one shoe. He extracted therefrom a crumpled square of paper and exclaimed, "Yeh!" Then he asked: "How many holes is Johnny down, Miss Judy?"

"Five holes, Weasel. How did you know? But, the hospital—"

"Five! But it could 'a been worse. We gotta hurry!"

The tan roadster was near-by.

AN apathetic gallery meandering up the fourth fairway marked the match. The Weasel lost no time in assuming the burden of Johnny Mayhew's bag. There was no time for explanations, either from the Weasel as to why he had failed to show up that morning, or from the man who had shot a miserable 81 to get himself five down. Only a protest from Miata delayed the match briefly, and this was soon over-ruled, the referee opining that any competitor might choose whomever he wished as a caddy.

Johnny Mayhew was still five holes in the red. He was somehow even par for the afternoon and had lost no further ground—yet. But, even so, there were but fifteen holes left to play, and Joe Miata wasn't missing many.

"I'll tell you where to shoot and give you the clubs," the Weasel told Mayhew soberly. "You swing 'em."

Mayhew was in the state of the average duffer, ready to try anything. The advice sounded sometimes foolish, but the results were as often start-

ling. Or perhaps it was that the obscure young assistant pro had a grooved swing.

In any case *they* carded three holes of a stroke better than par before reaching the end of the first nine. *They* played it in thirty-two blows, three under, to tie the existing course record.

But if they expected Joe Miata to do the accordion act, they were badly mistaken. Miata could play golf with the best of them in that business, and his reputation as a front runner was notorious. Their 32 won them back just two holes.

So they turned for home with nine to go, still three behind. The Weasel, pale and gimlet-eyed, hustling the sticks as he had never hustled before, was as nervous as a molting hen. He saw the holes slipping by and Miata's lead looming larger.

A birdie four on the long twelfth, a product of the Weasel's skillful jockeying, helped some. But they had to birdie 13 to halve—tough ball in any league.

On 14 they got a break. After both players had played wide of the island green, Miata failed to pitch close enough for a par. With the help of a jittery ten-footer, they got another one back. One down. . . .

But Miata wasn't through yet. Still in front, he was dangerous. He kicked a long iron so close to the 15th that a birdie was a mere formality. That one hurt. Two down and four to go. Running out of holes. . . .

The Weasel was tight-lipped, and paler. He studied the wind sluicing up the 16th fairway, refused Johnny Mayhew his high-powered driver, counseled accuracy—and it paid off.

Miata, striving for extra distance, found nesty Bermuda and failed to get home. Johnny was on with a spoon, second to card a winning par.

One down, two to go They approached the 17th with its big, double-level green. The Weasel studied the cross wind and the green, and consulted his crumpled sheet of

paper. Mayhew wanted to use a five iron. The Weasel shook his head sternly.

"Take a seven and play short," he ordered.

Mayhew swung, and the ball reached the Weasel's target. The Weasel smiled and said:

"Now watch Miata's shot."

MIATA'S iron climbed into the cross wind, passed over the pin, dropped to the back level of the 17th. Then it took one big hop and was gone in the woods beyond. Miata swore aloud and tommy-hawked the club into the turf.

"Funny," commented Mayhew. "I played to the *lower* level this morning, and mine did the same thing."

It didn't seem funny to Miata. He wore a forbidding scowl as he waded into the underbrush. He scowled for quite a while and finally chopped at the ball with a heavy wedge. The ball barely trickled out of the long grass. Miata wrapped the wedge around the handiest tree.

He had an impossible chip left down to the lower level. His ball slid yards past the cup, and another of Miata's matched irons was reduced to twisted metal. He did well to salvage a six. Mayhew's bogey won with ease. The match was square. The gallery that raced for the 18th tee could hardly be described apathetic.

Mayhew had the honor. Fatigue had gone from his face. He studied the hazard-splotched home-fairway that elbowed around an ocean inlet. The wind was behind now.

"Well, Weasel," he asked, "guess you want me to play it safe again, eh?"

"Not much! We held back off the last tee. Now let's see you gun one. Right over those trees." He unsheathed Mayhew's heavy, deep-faced driver.

Johnny Mayhew teed high and took a wide stance. His hips swiveled in a lazy pivot that slung the heavy bludgeon over his shoulder in an in-

mense arc. Then his weight shifted, and his hips whipped the club head against the ball with terrific momentum. There was a clean, deep impact of persimmon and gutta percha.

Up and out went the ball, climbing into the upper air, rolling with over-spin. It reached out over the lagoon, looped over the bordering fringe of palms at the turn of the fairway, and finally fell slowly from sight.

Miata scowled and broke out a new "Sweepstakes" ball. He lashed out furiously with his 200 pounds of beef, but he had not dared negotiate the carry over the water hazard and his ball wound up nearly 50 yards behind Mayhew. That left him with a 250 yard second to the par-five green, a shot made more difficult by the deep, weedy ravine that cut across the fairway directly in front of the hole.

Miata measured the distance with a baleful eye. At last he decided on a brassie, sent Whitey ahead, and swung desperately. The shot soared off the fairway and arched towards the pin. Weasel, watching from ahead, crossed fingers tightly. He murmured as he watched:

"He's straight for it, but it's too low. He should 'a used a spoon. He'll never make it. It's dying. It's short. It's in the barranca!"

The Weasel thrust the midiron at Mayhew. "All we gotta do is hit the green and pick up the marbles. It's big as a house. You can't miss!"

Johnny Mayhew didn't. He drilled a tremendous right to left iron that was still looping upwards as it passed over the barranca, that dropped lazily on the front edge of the mown bent, kicked thrice pinwards.

The Weasel wanted to cheer out loud with the gallery, but out of the corner of his eye he caught a tail of movement, and the cheer died in his throat. Two hundred yards down the fairway he saw Whitey shambling into the barranca on the double quick. And the Weasel knew what that meant. He handed Johnny the putt-

er, elbowed through the stamping gallery, and lit out in Whitey's wake, the bag jolting on his back.

WEASEL found Whitey examining the weedy slope of the hazard feverishly, all the time working over towards the right where the ravine flattened out into fairway again. The Weasel had lined the ball up, and he went to work to locate it. But he had hardly commenced his search when Whitey sang out:

"Here ya are, Mr. Miata—right behind this tree. Must a kicked over, huh?"

Weasel knew better. No ball could have kicked out of that soft ground. But there, sitting cleanly on the open turf, in line for a pitch and run to the cup, was a glistening new "Sweepstakes" ball.

It was *too* new. The Weasel knew quite well where that ball had come from—Whitey's pocket.

But Joe Miata was inspecting the lie, simulating surprise, then satisfaction. Now there was a mashie niblic in his hand for a pitch and run—the best shot in Joe Miata's bag. The ball squirted to the green, hobbled towards the cup, and stopped not a dozen inches away—a cinch four.

The Weasel yelled: "You can't get away with that! Whitey planted that ball!"

"And," returned the caddy master, "I'll plant this in your pan in a minute!"

The Weasel was ready for it there. He threw down the bag and blocked Whitey's pawing hands with small, hard fists. A. C. Tuttle stepped between them. The Weasel appealed to the chairman of the greens committee, but Tuttle gestured silence and pointed to the green.

Johnny Mayhew was measuring the thirty feet of slippery surface between his ball and the cup. The Weasel stopped breathing. If Johnny three-putted, it meant holt, match, and tournament.

Then he saw the obscure assistant

pro's hands move in a gentle liquid motion. The ball rippled off the putter blade, came smoothly over the brushed velvet.

But Johnny Mayhew was putting for something more than a hole, a golf match, or even a golf tournament. Over the last few yards, final few feet, struggling against the break, it came—wheeled to the lip, dived, rattled, and stayed down! An eagle three to beat Joe Miata's phony birdie.

The Weasel felt Judy Tuttle hugging him.

ON the clubhouse veranda flash guns exploded. There was a presentation speech and a sizable check for Johnny Mayhew; and a runner-up prize for Joe Miata, who had just lost his first home match in six years as professional at Sandy Point.

As quickly as possible Miata sidled from the distasteful limelight. The loser's rôle was hardly in his line. As he neared the clubhouse exit, A. C. Tuttle intercepted him, withdrew from one pocket a mud-flecked but virtually new "Sweepstakes" ball.

"Believe you forgot something, Joe," Tuttle said.

Joe Miata looked very, very dumb.

"This," continued Tuttle ruthlessly, "strikingly resembles the ball you drove from the eighteenth tee. I discovered it in the bank of the barranca, ground well into the soil by some one's foot—no doubt Whitey's."

"No wonder," interjected the Weasel, "I couldn't find it!"

Tuttle seemed to notice the Weasel for the first time, and he said in a voice that was more kindly: "Young man, this little incident convinces me that you were telling the truth last night. I believe I owe you an apology."

"Thanks, Mr. Tuttle, you're regular. But, that ain't the half of it. Get a load of this!" He thrust upon the chairman of the green committee the

crumpled sheet of paper he had salvaged from the escapade of the previous evening.

Tuttle stared in bewilderment at a hodge-podge of rectangles, kidney-shaped enclosures, and light-and-dark-shaded areas. "What on earth is this?" he demanded.

Mumbling, "nothing of importance, A. C.," Miata reached for the paper.

"Nothing of importance! Miata, this is in your handwriting. And I recognize the ground plan of our second nine. But what in the devil are the light and dark shadings?"

"I'll tell ya, Mr. Tuttle," put in the Weasel. "That right there is the reason Joe Miata never lost a match at Sandy Point in his life. Whenever he has an important game on he gives this to the greensmen the night before. It's his watering map.

"He has the whole golf course watered according to his instructions. Some greens are so hard that they won't hold any kind of a shot, even a niblick. Others are soaked down so the ball won't run. And all the time Joe Miata knows where to play while the other guy is playing blind and figuring he isn't hitting his shots."

Tuttle tongued his lips. "Just a minute now. I begin to see the light. Miata, I remember this morning on the seventeenth you played deliberately to the back level, knowing that you were practically certain to three-putt, which you did. And yet you won

the hole with ease—because Johnny Mayhew played correctly to the lower level, but had the strange misfortune to bounce clear over into the woods and finish with a six."

"Right!" exclaimed the Weasel. "But, this afternoon, Joe Miata fell into his own trap. The wind had dried the green out so that it wouldn't hold on either level. So we played short for a chip and won with a bogey."

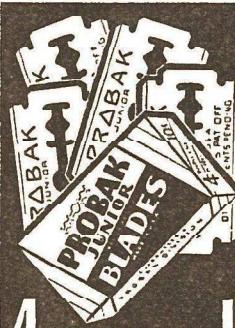
"I don't think there's much more to be said. Weasel, get me Johnny Mayhew, if you please. Miata, this of course finishes you up at Sandy Point. You may call for your check in the morning."

WHEN the Weasel returned with Johnny Mayhew and Judy, Tuttle said: "Johnny, your superior has just—er, resigned. Will you accept the apologies of a short-sighted and short-tempered old man if I offer you the professional job at the club at the usual salary?"

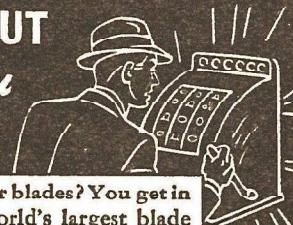
"I will," returned Mayhew, "on one condition—that you fire the present caddymaster and give that job to Weasel."

Tuttle studied the Weasel sternly and said: "Weasel, do you think you could stop—er, 'booming' long enough to settle down here at Sandy Point?"

"I sure could Mr. Tuttle, just so long as I get to pack double for Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Mayhew once in a while."



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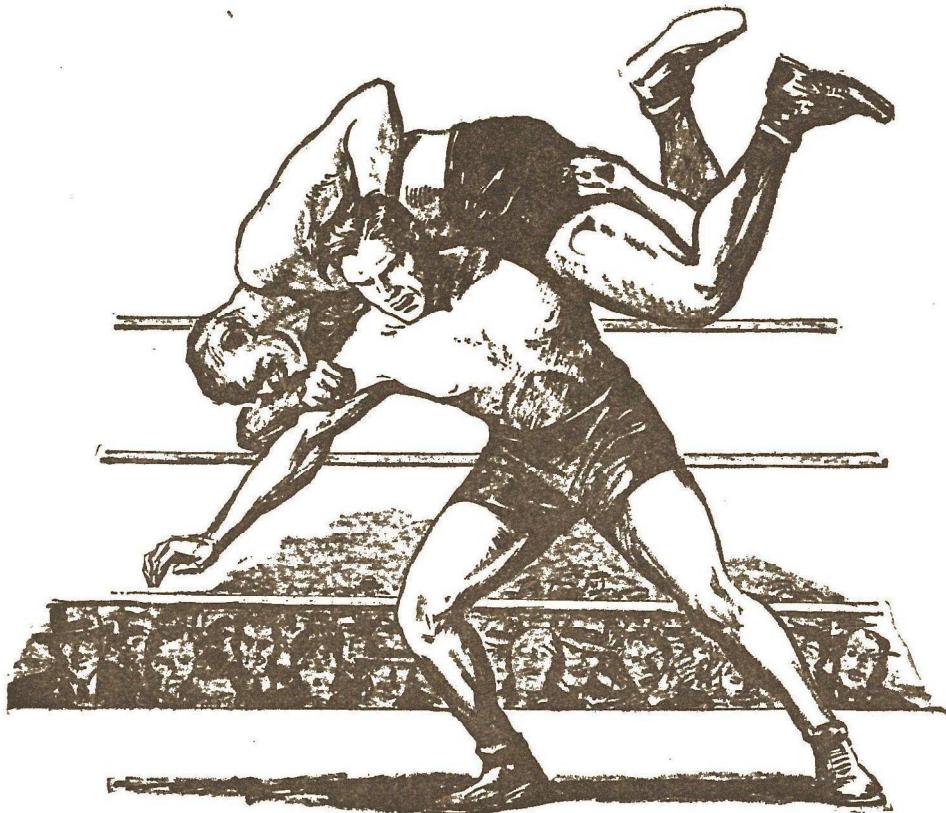


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PROBAK JUNIOR

Grudge Grappler's Manhunt



By Bob De Haven

Author of "Tennis Misfit," etc.

It was in a wholesale grappler's murderous fracas that Danny Lamb found the man who had stolen his sister's inheritance. And to single out his enemy among seven other gladiators in the ring, would be asking for a broken neck.

THE young man's body was taut as he scanned once more the wrestling pictures on the wall. Those cold, clear eyes moved from the wall to a snapshot he cupped in his hands. Danny Lamb was on a manhunt.

His physique had been too perfectly constructed in eight years of amateur wrestling to sag visibly after four days of walking and hitch-hiking from Oklahoma to Illinois City. Two hours of waiting in Paul Golden's outer office were dull, bitter hours, but when the

secretary had asked him to leave and come back the next day, Lamb stayed on.

He was hungry and broke. He could wrestle, and Paul Golden was a wrestling promoter—Danny Lamb had to see him. A match in Illinois City to earn a little grub money, and Lamb would continue his search for Monte Burke. With Burke he could settle a lopsided score for his own sister, Lolita.

A fat, tall man emerged from the office and called instruction to the girl. His voice was almost a shout.

"Heller got his head cracked in Toledo last night and waited until now to notify me. See if you can get another wrestler for—"

"Let me do that," Danny interrupted.

Golden whirled. Through the thick lenses of his glasses, Golden's eyes looked like specimens from a deep-sea diver's collection.

"Let you do what?" Golden asked irritably.

"Wrestle," Lamb answered promptly.

Golden's lips tightened across his uneven teeth.

"If all the young punks who wanted to wrestle got in the ring, there wouldn't be any room for professionals. What's your name?"

"Danny Lamb."

"Never heard of you. Take off your coat."

Lamb displayed two square, hard-muscled shoulders. His heart pounded as Golden speculated silently. The promoter finally snapped his fingers.

"All right. Report tomorrow night at seven o'clock. I'll let you in the Wrestle Royale, not because I'm a good promoter but because I'm a lazy one. Lucky for you that you were here at the right minute. There's fifteen bucks in it for you."

The first smile in four days brightened Danny's face, a smile warm and appealing that nobody could resist. "Gee, thanks."

"Maybe you won't thank me after tomorrow night."

Paul Golden turned to go, never once relaxing that sheet-iron toughness that characterized his business dealings.

Danny Lamb sat down again and fumbled with the torn lining of his coat. Relief at landing an engagement etched a satisfied look on his worn face.

Golden stopped, looked back, and spoke: "When did you eat last?"

Lamb looked up, surprised. "Why—why this noon."

"You're a liar," Golden returned gruffly. "Miss Larkin, advance this man five dollars."

THE next night at seven o'clock, Danny Lamb was putting on second-hand wrestling togs purchased with part of the five dollars. A man of about forty, bearing old battle scars, came in and sat down beside him.

"In the Wrestle Royale?" the stranger asked.

"Yep."

"So am I. Name's Jim Delaney. You're new, aren't you?"

"Right. My name's Lamb. Tonight's my first time in the ring—for money."

Delaney nodded silently as if a guess had been correct. "That's too bad," he said at last.

"Why?"

"This mob of cut throats will make mince meat out of you." Delaney spoke in a metallic voice.

"Maybe not. Who do I fight?" asked Lamb.

"Just eight other guys. It's a lot of fun—if you live. This dizzy idea has sent more than one greenhorn home walkin' on his heels."

"I don't get it, Delaney. I know I'm dumb, but—"

"Well, they throw nine muggs into the ring and they all wrestle each other. The first man out—which will probably be you—is just out. The next two who are pinned wrestle each other in the first two-man bout, then the next two and the next two and so on. The last two remaining at the end fight

the windup. So far it sounds simple, I know, but the Bouncer is in this Royale tonight, and he's murder. Look out for him."

Danny Lamb laughed artificially. "They can't scare me."

"You're lucky," was the flat answer.

They completed dressing in silence. Delaney was likable. Without appearing to pry or be fatherly, he had tipped Danny off to what was in store for him. Lamb appreciated that. Without looking at Danny Lamb, Delaney started to talk again with the indifference that shielded a deeper feeling.

"Just go in there, make a lot of motions, keep your eyes open, and don't step in front of any flying feet. Think of yourself, not the other guy. You'll be the only one who is looking out for Lamb."

Paul Golden entered, obscured slightly by his own cigar smoke.

"Hello, Delaney, and—what's your name?" Danny told him. "Boys, I'll make it brief. Lamb, you're the first one out of the ring. After about five minutes, take the dive and quit. Delaney, you're next out. Remember, I don't want any of my stars knocked off early. This Wrestle Royale is doing all right as an audience-puller, and we don't want to make any mistakes.

"And to avoid any errors, Stratigos, Dubail and the Bouncer are stars. Let's have plenty of action. The fans paid to get in."

Seven thousand blood-hungry wrestling fans proved Golden's statement that the Wrestle Royale was doing all right as an audience-puller. The great crowd eyed the nine wrestlers as they stood waiting to jump into the ring when introduced by the announcer.

"That's him—the Bouncer," Delaney said, nodding to a short, bull-backed man whose oily hair was combed over his eyes, gorillalike, whose stumpy legs were strapped with adhesive. Danny gazed at the Bouncer, but could not get a square look at the face under the hair and shaggy eyebrows.

Then Danny Lamb's name was called. A few scattered handclaps greeted the unknown's jump into the ring. Delaney hopped in and got a bigger round of applause. Dubail was next—the bright, clean-looking type, good for feminine appeal. A wrestler whose name Danny didn't catch followed. Then the Greek, Stratigos, and the Bouncer, announced as Bouncer Burke from San Francisco.

With a smug smile of arrogance, the Bouncer hopped over the three ropes, amused by the mixed booing and cheering; he loved both. After a low bow to the four sides of the ring, the Bouncer eyed the other occupants of the ring disdainfully. He looked squarely at Danny Lamb.

Something froze inside the amateur grappler. The Bouncer resembled the picture of Monte Burke. Maybe the long hunt was a short hunt after all. Maybe the account could be settled right now. Lamb walked across the ring to the snarling Burke.

"What's your first name, Burke?" Danny asked evenly, his blue eyes blazing hate.

The crowd followed Lamb's movement, and the Bouncer sensed that all eyes were on him. Here was a chance for a hippodrome stunt.

"Why it's Monte, and I'm tough like this."

Without warning, a paralyzing slap resounded on Danny Lamb's cheek. The surprised crowd sucked in air. Lamb fell to one knee, regained his senses quickly. A maddening anger possessed him.

From the kneeling position, he butted straight forward into the middle of Monte Burke. Together they jack-knifed through the ropes onto the hard floor. The spectators jumped to their feet; the startled referee slipped down to the floor, and with the help of three bluecoats, separated the two and put them back in the ring.

The crowd was all but panicked. They had suffered Monte Burke's outrages for weeks, swore never to come back, and then laid their money on the

line when the mean-tempered grappler was slated for an appearance.

Delaney's look at Lamb was a reprimand. But the infuriated kid paid no attention. He stomped in his corner, anxious for the match to start so he could have at the Bouncer again.

The announcer tried to introduce the one remaining fighter, but the crowd wouldn't listen. They hooted: "Let 'em wrestle; let 'em wrestle."

With their backs together in the center of the ring, the referee yelled, "Wrestle," and the riot started. Knots of two and three gladiators broke off from the mass in the middle. Fists, elbows and knees were legal weapons in the rough and tumble battle.

DANNY LAMB looked briefly for the squat, wide form of Bouncer Burke. He was slammed to the mat before he could recognize a person in the ring. The stunning blow sent dancing, exploding lights before his eyes. A punishing weight settled in the middle of his back. Some one picked him up in a full nelson and held him in a slanting position, stomach up and feet dragging on the floor.

Bouncer Burke coiled for the attack, but instead of applying a hold and pinning his helpless opponent, he flew into the air and socked down with his full weight on the limp stomach of Lamb. The act of the Bouncer. The kid didn't know it, but Jim Delaney rushed in and rolled the Bouncer out of the ring. Danny staggered to his feet, out but not down.

The brawl battered on, plunging, tearing, kicking, biting. The crowd yipped with sheer joy at the carnage. Once all the grapplers piled in the middle of the mat. The referee tore them apart to find no man pinned, and the half-naked scrappers went at it again.

Young Lamb's head cleared, but it cleared to no pleasant thought. It told him that he had been wrong. He knew how to wrestle, but he didn't know anything about the professional ring, the tactics of the pro matmen, and

the cruelty of its villains. But another thought pierced his clouded consciousness. He had promised Lolita that he would find Monte Burke, and now he was in the same wrestling ring with the man. That was gratifying.

Danny Lamb stumbled around a mountain of tangled wrestlers to find Jim Delaney wilting under some elbow kicks of Bouncer Burke. Danny spun Burke around and dove at his legs. Before the contact, Bouncer was off the mat like a kangaroo. In the air, he withdrew into a ball and descended with a terrific impact on the prostrate Danny Lamb. The kid got to his feet, and Bouncer let him have one on the button. Danny folded and fell out of the ring into the press row.

He had the sensation of being helped through the crowd and of people yelling encouragement. He had lain for some time on the floor of the dressing room when the promoter shook him to consciousness.

"Lamb, you went in like a lion. You did all right." Golden spoke as if giving a compliment made him uncomfortable.

"I got licked."

"That's what you were supposed to do," Golden assured him. "What's between you and Burke? Why did you go for him like a wildman?"

Danny sat up and failed to stifle a moan that a pain in his back evinced.

"That's private business," Danny Lamb answered.

"Okay."

"What about next week, Golden?"

"If you want to try it again, all right, but don't tell your folks that I forced it on you."

"Burke will be in it?" Lamb asked hopefully.

"Sure."

"Then I'm in it."

Golden handed the kid a new ten dollar bill.

Slowly Danny dressed himself. One arm would not work at all. Struggling to keep his head clear until he found a bed, he walked out of the Coliseum still gorged with yowling humanity.

Western Union carried a wire that night to District Attorney Hoffer in Oklahoma.

Under a sign labelled "BEDS 10c," Lamb opened a dingy door to sleep off the soreness of the worst physical beating he had ever taken.

THE next morning the stiffness of his bones and muscles made him wince when he turned over on the hard bed. After dressing and taking a short walk to limber up, he bought a bowl of soup in a beanery. His steps then took him toward the Coliseum. Jim Delaney walked up.

"Hello, kid. How do you feel?"

"Sore, but I'm all right."

"Found a place to get your chuck yet?"

"No."

"Follow me. I'll show you where I room and board. Best place in town for wrestlers."

They walked for fifteen minutes and arrived at a boarding house with a respectable front. Jim introduced Lamb and paid his bill through the first week. Then the two went to Clancy's Gym and took a stiff workout that lasted three hours.

Delaney was a friendly soul, and in the daily workouts in which they engaged that week, the old-timer wised up Danny to more than one trick of the professional trade. He demonstrated the principal punishing holds and the various escapes. He lamented the fickleness of the Illinois City fans. Once they boosted a wrestler to stardom, that wrestler could not lose. He *had* to win—every time. One bad match, and out—oblivion as far as that town was concerned.

He discussed the individual wrestlers that were current favorites with the Illinois City fans. When he came to Bouncer Burke, his voice levelled to a tone of quiet anger.

"Burke carries the rough stuff too far," Delaney said. "Golden should run him out of town."

"That wouldn't be anything new to

Burke," Danny put in fiercely. Delaney looked straight at Lamb.

"I thought you knew something about that hombre. Do you mind giving me the details? I hate his guts, and I know he's tough. The best thing for you to do may be to go back home and forget all about it."

Danny Lamb's face set. "Sure I'll tell you, but I won't go home. My sister sent me to college. How she did it on a stenographer's eighteen-dollar-a-week salary, I don't know. It was tough sledding for us both. I never came home at Christmas time, too expensive, and I could make a little money working in the post office in the college town. So I didn't know about Burke until too late."

"Last fall Lolita started to write me about a man she had met. Described him as a gentleman who was working for a company leasing oil wells. Pretty soon I figured that she was growing very fond of him. I was pleased—Lolita deserved a break."

"Then she wrote that through this friend she was investing our three thousand dollars, left us by our father, and that she was going to marry him in June." Lamb's face tightened into ugly lines hewn by the oath of revenge. Then he continued:

"Well, she never saw him again after she handed over the money. His disappearance broke her heart, and she feels worse than ever because half the money was mine. She wanted to pay my share back to me—five dollars at a time."

"Lolita would not tell me who the man was. She felt she had let herself in for it and she would take her medicine. But I'm not made that way. I swore I'd find the guy and tear him to pieces. I laid the whole thing before the district attorney, and he said they couldn't chase every swindler who cleaned up and left the state. So I turned D. A. myself."

"I found this snapshot in a drawer at home. A close friend of Lolita's broke a promise when she told me it was Burke, the man who had made

Lolita fall for him. And she told me the man was a wrestler. I left home the same night.

"So, Delaney, you can see I'm glad I ran across Bouncer Burke. I'm going to get a confession out of him."

WHEN the grapplers were dressing for the Wrestle Royale, one man's name was buzzing among them. It was Tony Zotos. This startling Greek had swept a swath of victories through the United States and was undefeated to date in this country. Paul Golden had signed Zotos for the following week. Zotos would break crowd records in Illinois City.

The excitement did not penetrate Danny Lamb. He was thinking of an oily-haired ruffian who strutted elaborately in the ring and delighted himself and the fans by double-crossing his opponents and inflicting any kind of torture or abuse.

Golden came in and roared instructions. Lamb was again to be the first man out of the Wrestle Royale. Silently he nodded his head when Golden asked if he understood.

A howling mob greeted the nine wrestlers as they were introduced, and Danny Lamb was heartened by the round of applause that greeted his entrance. The fans recalled his gameness of the week before.

Monte Burke fawned before the crowd, started an argument with the referee, and made himself generally obnoxious while hogging the spotlight.

Danny Lamb had always been a boy to learn quickly. One Wrestle Royale, and he had learned which of the other eight men it was wise to mix with. He sparred with Jim Delaney briefly; then he switched to Pat Milburn, another youngster. Monte Burke was being ganged in the center of the ring. Soon all nine men were in the punishing brawl.

A pair of clenched fists slapped Danny on the back of the neck, and he found himself at the bottom of a pile with his head jammed against

Burke's. The Bouncer spluttered a sentence punctuated with grunts:

"You're supposed to dive out first, punk. Better get goin'." Lamb's answer was a jerk of his head that crashed against Burke's nose. Blood spurted onto the dirty mat. The crowd howled at the sight of Burke in distress. Enraged, Bouncer lashed across the ring to mix it with Lamb, and the crowd took up the cause of the underdog, and, which was more important, so did the other wrestlers.

Another mêlée formed, with Burke and Lamb tearing and scratching at the bottom of the heap. The referee pulled them off, warning each man to mix it because the Royale was six minutes old and no man had been pinned.

Delaney said to Lamb in a tangle: "Better go ahead and roll over and play dead, Danny. If you disobey Golden, he'll wash you up."

Danny managed a smile and fought on. He wasn't leaving that ring yet. In fact, he became instrumental in pinning Pat Milburn with a body scissors and an arm lock. The crowd cheered Danny's success. With one man over the dam, more followed: Delaney, Jasper, a newcomer named Holland, Stratigos, and Ford.

Danny Lamb had defied orders and risked his professional future. Three wrestlers were left. Kelleher, Burke, and Lamb. The first of these three to be pinned would meet Ford in the semi-windup, and the last two would wrestle the feature match of the evening.

DANNY LAMB, his head throbbing from the unmerciful beating he was suffering, reeled in the ring, supported only by his bulldog courage and the realization that only Kelleher stood between him and the match he wanted more than anything else in the world. Then Bouncer Burke was on him.

An elbow slap floored Danny Lamb, and Kelleher clamped a half nelson on

the college man that seemed to tear out the roots of his shoulder muscles. They fell to the side on the mat. A devastating weight crushed them hard into the mat. Bouncer Burke was annihilating them as they fought each other. The crowd screeched with excitement.

Lamb knew it was coming. If his head would only clear, he could fight him off. He got his legs free, then his head and shoulders; but he remained crouched on the mat. Maybe he could—he had to—against Monte Burke. . . .

The pounding feet of the Bouncer, running for his leap, gave the warning. Danny's wrestling sense did not fail him. Just before the crash he moved out of range of the big gun. Burke's body struck Kelleher and collapsed the body as if it were a nickel balloon.

Danny Lamb accepted his opportunity; he exploded into Kelleher, already willing to toss in the towel, and crumpled him to the mat with a short arm-scissors. The referee patted Lamb's back. He jumped to his feet and started for Monte Burke. The referee pried them apart. That mix was to be saved for the feature match. A pandemonium of deafening sound greeted the finish of the Royale. The outcome pleased the customers.

Delaney was waiting to help Danny Lamb to the shower room. The battered, exhausted kid threw an arm over the veteran's back. They pushed through the crowd. When they were alone, Lamb collapsed on the floor. Delaney stretched him on a rubbing table and worked over the bruised, battered muscles. He rubbed the legs with alcohol and kneaded the knotty muscles in the back.

"You did all right, Danny," Delaney said when the kid stirred. "Lie right where you are. Don't move a muscle. You're going to wrestle some more tonight."

A freckle faced youngster opened the door and called to Jim Delaney.

"Ready for you in the ring."

Delaney spoke to Lamb: "Stay still, rest—get some of that sap back. I'll see that nobody bothers you."

Outside the door, Jim collared the boy. "Take this key. Don't let anybody in that room—Golden's orders."

The kid stuttered in his excitement: "But there's Golden now."

The promoter was storming to the room where his windup wrestler lay exhausted on the training table.

"Let me in there," he seethed. "I'll teach a rassle-bum when to follow my instructions."

"Wait a minute," Delaney warned, and something in his voice halted Golden. "That kid is wrestling for something more than money tonight. If I were you, I'd let him alone right now. The fans like him all right."

Golden was not accustomed to that kind of talk.

"What if I don't?" he demanded.

"You might get your head tore off—by him," Delaney said, and marched off to the ring.

Danny Lamb slept for an hour of the next seventy-five minutes; then Delaney roused him and stood him in a cold shower.

After Ford had pinned Kelleher, the crowd chanted a demand for Lamb and Burke.

LAMB appeared, fresh, hair combed, looking fit. He backed against the ropes in his corner. He had fought in countless high-school and college matches, but never had he wanted so much to win. Whatever he had learned physically and mentally about the ancient game would have to serve him now.

Boos greeted Bouncer Burke, who shook twin fists at Lamb, as the announcer began: "And now for the windup match between the co-winners of the Wrestle Royale. On my right, Bouncer Burke, weighing one hundred ninety pounds from San Francisco, California." The man at the mike strode on through the chorus of cat-calls and boos: "And on my left is Danny Lamb." But Danny had waved

a disapproving hand. The announcer stopped; Lamb leaned down to say something to him.

"Pardon me, ladies and gentlemen, I had the man's name wrong." Danny looked at Monte Burke. "It is Danny Gillis, weighing two hundred pounds, from Delker, Oklahoma."

At that name Monte Burke's face contracted into a worried scowl. Darting swiftly, his small eyes scanned Lamb's face. The name Gillis had taken him by surprise. He thought the Lolita Gillis affair was a dead issue.

Lamb saw District Attorney Hopper slip into an unoccupied ringside seat.

The referee called the gladiators to the center of the mat.

"Didn't expect to meet me here, did you Burke?"

"I'll kill you," came Burke's answer.

The referee's instructions were brief. Paul Golden was waiting in Danny's corner.

"Are you Danny Gillis, the A.A.U. champion and Olympic champion?"

"Certainly."

"Why didn't you tell me?" Golden asked excitedly.

"That's my business."

Had he used his right name, Lamb knew Monte Burke would not be leering in the opposite corner.

Paul Golden hopped to the center of the ring.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began, scorning the booming microphone's help. "We have the unexpected pleasure of offering in his first professional match, Danny Gillis of Oklahoma, National A.A.U. heavyweight champion and 1936 Olympic heavyweight champion."

A thundering roar drowned out Golden's first two attempts at the first words of his next sentence. "Next week Monte Burke will appear in the windup against the newest sensation in America—Tony Zotos. Tickets now on sale."

The match started.

It was evident from the first clash of the two men in the center of the

mat, that neither intended to lose the argument. Bouncer Burke was making good money by being the most hated man in Illinois City. One defeat, and the fickle followers of grunt and groan would toss him aside for some other sadistic thrill.

Bouncer knew that others had gone before him. And then, too, he hated Danny Lamb, the college boy, pulling the hero act on account of his sister. Lolita was a sucker from the beginning. The brother had no business messing things up after she had parted willingly from her money.

They smacked onto the mat, Lamb falling into a headlock. He didn't wait. That lock hurt, and he wanted to get free. With mule kicks that packed tremendous drive he fought for freedom. On the last kick, Burke's arm slipped over the crown of his head, tearing the hair, and his body shot out toward the ropes. Burke was up and over him before he could regain his feet.

Three vicious kicks about the head and shoulders, and Danny Lamb was standing bewildered outside the ring. To Lamb it was inhuman; to the crowd, it was entertainment. Fortunately, Danny Lamb saved himself from going completely into a rage. The punishment added coals to his white-hot anger.

He listened to the referee count to fifteen then he climbed back into the ring. Burke rushed in with a Kangaroo Kick that shot Lamb hard at right angles of the taped ropes. Then a flying tackle pressed him through the laces onto the floor again.

THE crowd was silent, as a great crowd can be. The fight was ending too quickly. Their hopes for the fresh, honest-looking youth had been preposterous, impossible hopes. It would soon be over.

For Danny Lamb it was only the beginning. He reasoned that he was a fool to fight at long range. He would have to get down on the mat and stay there where he could tie up those

lethal heels of Monte Burke. Wrestling was his game, and he would force Burke to wrestle—then force something else out of him too.

Applause broke out for the smile that cracked across the pained face of Danny Gillis. The kid seemed anxious to get back in the ring to face his own slaughter. This time he dropped to the mat to meet the Bouncer's attack.

Burke grabbed Lamb's head and shot his wrist under the kid's chin. The frenzied spectators screamed at the referee. The official did pry the wrist loose, but when he started to circle the matmen, the wrist slipped back.

Danny Lamb's head felt as if it would pop open, but he struggled to his feet and dragged Bouncer with him. Reaching way back, he hooked Burke's head and executed a terrific body slam that sent a thud detonating through the Coliseum.

Lamb leaped on his adversary, lifted him and administered another. But this time Burke slipped out of the ring and took twenty seconds to collect his scattered wits. Then back and forth the advantage changed—bitter, cruel wrestling, neither man succumbing to any of the furious holds.

An hour later the two were still wrestling as if their lives depended on it. Burke's rich wrestling life in Illinois City did depend on it. He must have been mulling over that fact when he tossed Lamb over the ropes onto the concrete floor. That crude measure had finished many a hardened professional; an amateur couldn't possibly stand up after kissing the pavement.

But Danny stood up, although his right side felt paralyzed. Jim Delaney was helping him walk among the ring-side chairs to see that his legs and arms worked all right. They did. A spark of life came back to them.

At the fifteen count, Lamb climbed back into the ring and stood up—waiting. The crowd pleaded with him to beware of Burke, but Danny stood—waiting. The Bouncer grinned, rushed at the dazed boy. Six feet away he

leaped into the air with his feet cocked for the Kangaroo Kick. This would surely gouge the Olympic champion into professional oblivion. The feet whipped forward, two hard clubs of torture.

Danny Gillis looked foggier than he actually was, for this Kangaroo Kick was what he had hoped for. Jim Delaney had explained a defense for it. With a quick movement, he side-stepped the attack—then dropped hard on Burke when he plopped to the canvas.

Danny Lamb rolled Burke over and into a step-over toe hold. With his own leg on the back of Bouncer's knee joint, and Burke's toe pressed forward toward the small of his back, the hold was as painful and punishing as any in the book.

BOUNCER slammed his palms on the mat, ran his finger through his hair in all the antics of a suffering wrestler. It was particularly amusing to Danny Gillis because he knew that Burke was really suffering. That toe was levered plenty far down.

The crowd s c r e a m e d , hooted, cheered. The gameness of the college youth was amazing. His unawareness of professional tricks was pitiful, but he was game. No sport crowd ever ignored that quality in an athlete.

Burke clawed for the ropes. This dumb amateur was not going to let him escape the toe hold. The ropes were his only hope. Inch by inch he made progress toward freedom from the vise that was grinding the muscles and bone of his left leg.

The crowd implored Danny to stop him. Danny let the attempt endure as long as possible; then, when Burke was several inches from the lower strand, he snapped the reaching arm and whipped the flattened body of Burke back into the middle of the mat. The toe hold stuck.

Golden looked on popeyed. The man named Hopper was in and out of his seat. Jim Delaney was the only on-looker who was not excited. He had

worked out for a week with Gillis. He knew what Danny could do.

The referee asked Burke if he had had enough. The shaggy head shook a negative answer. The pressure increased, and another howl split the air. The referee stooped again. Burke's head shook. The pressure increased.

A flailing arm attracted Lamb's attention. It waved desperately in a half circle. Danny waited for the man to come back; then he kicked hard. The flat of his shoe caught the wrist and bent it up and out, then socked it hard into Burke's back. It was a hammerlock applied with the foot.

Burke writhed, secure in two of wrestling's most punishing holds. It was now only a matter of how long Burke could last. And Burke could not afford to lose.

Danny Lamb kicked forward as he leaned forward. Burke groaned an appeal for mercy. Then Danny spoke to him:

"Did you sell Lolita Gillis that worthless stock?"

The ringsiders, including Hopper, could hear his question.

No answer. Lamb kicked on the hammerlock and leaned on the toe hold.

"Spit it out or I'll kill you."

Burke grunted and dropped his head on the mat. He could endure no more. Painfully he gasped: "Yes."

"That's all I want to know," Danny said and stood up, releasing the arm and leg.

The crowd reacted strangely. They applauded the gesture, knowing that Burke had not forfeited the match. They made a hero of the kid. The hurt grappler rolled over while Lamb stood off. Burke shook his leg and arm as he paced the square.

Then he faced Danny, a murderous light in his eyes. His fists came up under Danny Gillis' chin; the kid's teeth crushed together. His body, worn by the desperate struggle, hurtled backward and collapsed on the

mat. With split-second swiftness, the tide turned.

Then the Bouncer started bouncing. Six feet into the air, then down, full force, with all his weight, once, twice—and Lamb was rolling on the mat, helpless to rise and helpless to escape the thunderous pounding.

But Danny Lamb's disciplined mind was alert. There was a ridiculously fat Turk at Berlin who had turned the heavyweight quarter-finals into a slapstick show with that crude bouncing. But Sig McGill, the Canadian, had trimmed the Turk and broken three of his ribs in the bargain. And Danny knew how McGill had done it.

BURKE was in the air. Lamb gathered himself for a last effort. The strength that lies hidden in great athletes responded. Danny jerked to a stooping position, back horizontal; added force was obtained by twin elbows that strained upward. The down-rushing force met the uprising force. The bodies smashed together.

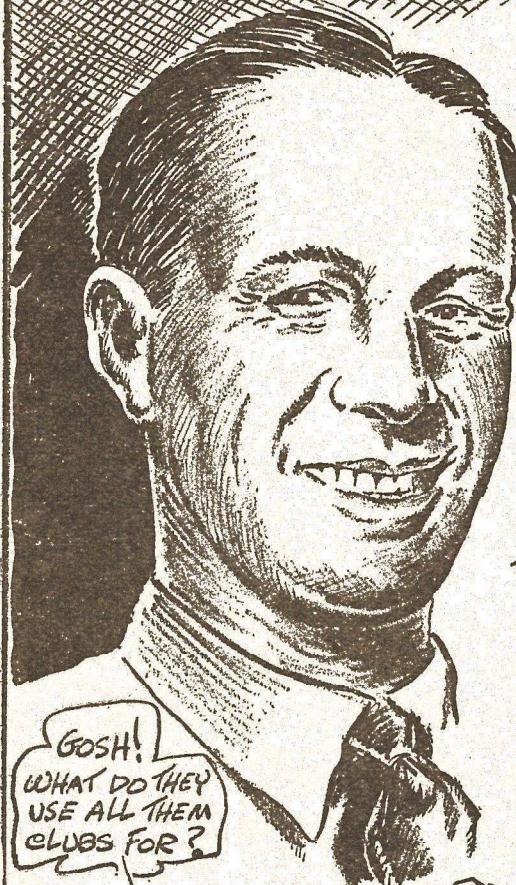
Monte Burke's back cracked over Danny's shoulders. The Bouncer flopped through the ropes and lay unconscious. Danny stood unsteadily and watched while the referee counted. Then he raised Danny Lamb's hand.

Danny Lamb remembered two important things that happened in the next half hour. He remembered Hopper's promise that he'd fight to the last ditch for Monte Burke whose guilt was a certainty. And Lamb remembered telling Paul Golden something. Paul had asked him if he would meet Tony Zotos next week for a share of the receipts and a guarantee of three hundred and fifty dollars. The smoke from Golden's cigar made Danny cough, but he answered: "Yes."

Jim Delaney put Danny Gillis to bed that night, and the kid sailed into a fitful but happy slumber. Scores were even. For Burke was in the hands of District Attorney Hopper, waiting extradition.

JOE
ARCHIBALD'S

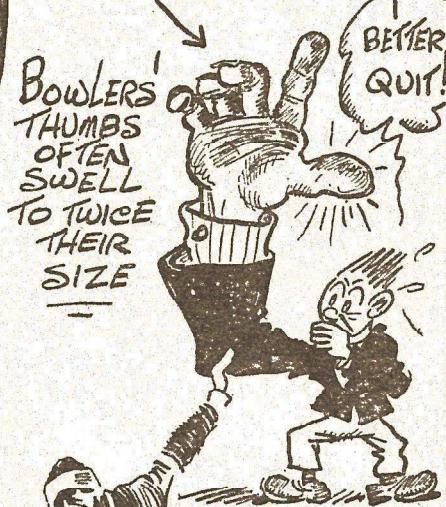
SPORTFOLIO -



FRANK
BENKOVIC
— MILWAUKEE —
HUNG UP A WORLD'S
RECORD OF 2259 IN
ALL-EVENTS BOWLING —

AND

BOWLERS
THUMBS
OFTEN
SWELL
TO TWICE
THEIR
SIZE



GENE MODJESKA, AGE 12-4 FT. 2 IN
TALL, SHOT A PAR 69 AT MADISON GOLF
LINKS, PEORIA, ILL - WITH 3 CLUBS!
A BRASSIE, A PUTTER AND A MASHIE!
THANK TO J NERKS

SKI JUMPING RECORDS
UNDER 240 FEET ARE
NOT EVEN RECOGNIZED

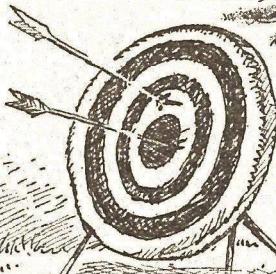
MEMPHIS
BILL
TERRY

- MGR
NEW YORK
GIANTS

PILOTED THE
TOLEDO CLUB OF
THE AMER. ASSN
WHEN ONLY 20
YEARS OF AGE



C. R. R.
R. R. I.



CHEST EXPANSION
LAURELS REST ON
THE BROW OF BEN
ZERSEN-
SIOUX CITY, I.A.
10 AND 3-4 INCHES

THE ARROW - NOW
ONLY USED IN THE
SPORT OF ARCHERY
IN THE CIVILIZED
WORLD HAS KILLED
MORE PEOPLE THAN
NOW POPULATE THE
ENTIRE GLOBE!!

ABRAHAM
LINCOLN - THE GREAT EMANCIPATOR -
- WAS ONCE A CHAMPION WRESTLER
IN ILLINOIS

Jos. Archibald.

Who's Who

in Movie Pugdom

By William J. McNulty

Star battlers and former champions of the ring give many silver-screen dramas the life, action, punch, atmosphere and realism necessary for top entertainment.

HOLLYWOOD has attracted many knights of the daze, not only temporarily, while they were active in the ring, but as a permanent place of residence. This, after warbling the fistic swan song.

Bing Conley, who was fist flinging a dozen years ago out of Lewiston, Me., as a middle and light-heavyweight, has been located in Hollywood the past seven years as a stand-in and bodyguard for Gregory Ratoff, screen comedian, and supplier of mug types for the studios. He has often appeared before the camera as one of the mug types, with and without a few speaking words. In the course of his ring career, Conley blocked hundreds of blows with his map, with the aforesaid map showing the results.

Larry Williams, who was at his best during the post-war period as a light-heavyweight, and later as a heavy, doing his slamming out of Philadelphia, Shamokin, Penn., and Bridgeport, Conn., has been living in Hollywood the past decade. Williams has been providing human atmosphere for screen stories of fistiana and the underworld and in night life scenes.

Al Kaufman, hailed from San Francisco as a heavyweight a quarter century ago. He went into movie production 15 years ago as a studio worker and became a technician and was

attached for varying periods to several of the plants in the Hollywood zone. At times, he has appeared before the camera in minor rôles in fight stories.

Joe Benjamin, who was active as a lightweight a dozen years ago, and at one time was considered of championship timber, has been appearing before the camera at intervals during the past decade, in minor rôles. Benjamin, who hailed from San Francisco as a ringster, married Marian Nixon, featured on the screen, but the couple were divorced two years ago.

Maxie Rosenbloom, former light-heavyweight champion whose training procedure for a ring battle consists of a bath and a massage, has been spending most of his time, during the past two years, in Hollywood. The Harlem Harlequin has been in the casts of several films, and with a featured position in the billing bestowed on him. Rosy has not officially announced his retirement from biff-dom, but he has cut down greatly on the volume of his ring engagements since going Hollywood.

Jack Herick, who was prominent as a middleweight 20 years ago, while representing Chicago and Indianapolis, has been living in Hollywood for 12 years. He has been in numerous non-speaking and atmospherical rôles in screen plays, and has also torn off a few lines in some productions.

Al McCoy, who claimed the middle-weight title 20 years ago, while making his home in Brooklyn, and proved to be a punch absorber extraordinary, although nothing to rave about on the offensive, has been located in Hollywood the past ten years. In addition to operating a public gymnasium, he is another atmospherical type for the studios. His family name is Al Rudolph.

"Broken Nose" Murphy, who was on the fistic battlefield out of Chicago 30 years ago, has been a Hollywood screen type the past 14 years. Murphy's severely battered phiz is his fortune, or rather, his livelihood. He provides a sharp contrast with the hero as the aide-de-scamp of the menace.

Sailor Sharkey, a middleweight 25 years ago, and hailing from San Francisco, has been playing atmospherical rôles in the Hollywood studios the past 15 years. Once he considered himself a smaller edition of Tom Sharkey, of New York City, who threw a scare into Heavyweight Champ Jim Jeffries in a memorable 25 rounder.

Gunboat Smith, a knocker-outer as a white-hope heavyweight when Jack Johnson was at the top of the heavy heap, and who hailed from New York City, and Philadelphia, was a minor-rôler in the Hollywood studios for some years, then returning east and dittoing at the Long Island studios. A veteran referee in boxing and rassling, some of Smith's work before the camera calls for him to serve as the third man in the ring in both sports.

Jim Jeffries, the Los Angeles and Burbank, California slugger, who won the heavyweight title from Bob Fitzsimmons and retired undefeated, only to make a comeback and be flattened by Jack Johnson, has been on the Hollywood studio employment list the past 20 years. He has appeared before the camera many times as a referee and second and also as a manager of fighters. He has also helped the directors in arranging atmosphere for ring stories. In addition to his studio

work, Jeff does some instructing and coaching in boxing for the screen players and their children.

Bill Papke, former middleweight champion, whose tragic death occurred by his own hand recently, was an extra at the Hollywood studios for a dozen years. Papke hailed from Spring Valley, and Kewanee, both in Illinois, when in the ring. He had the distinction of giving the late Stanley Ketchel three hard battles.

Tammany Young, who was a lightweight 35 years ago, as a Gothamite, afterward distinguished himself as a gate-crashing contemporary of One Eyed Connolly, the chiselling champ, moved to Hollywood 12 years ago. He had appeared before the camera many times and had some speaking rôles as well as being used for atmosphere. He died in 1936, at Hollywood.

Charlie Eytion, was a ladler of leather out of San Francisco as a welter-weight 40 years ago, and later became a widely known referee in Pacific Coast championship bouts. He affiliated himself with the movie industry 22 years ago, at 'Frisco, later transferring to Hollywood. Starting before the camera, he shifted to behind the scenes, eventually becoming a studio manager. Eytion, whose wife was Kathlyn Williams, for many years featured on the silent screen, died in 1936.

JACK RENAULT, veteran Montreal heavyweight and oncee considered for a title bout with Champ Jack Dempsey, has been in and out of picture production as an actor during the past decade. Jess Willard, the Kansas Man Mountain, whom Dempsey dethroned at Toledo in 1919, has appeared in a serial and several features, later establishing a food store in Hollywood, which flopped. Willard is now fronting for a Pittsburgh night club.

The late Jim Corbett, cleverest of all heavyweight champions, and a native of 'Frisco, was featured in a number of movies. Jack Dempsey, the

Manassa Mauler, who was ousted by Gene Tunney, was starred and featured in a number of features, while a resident of Los Angeles. Gene Tunney, most aesthetic of heavy champs, and product of Greenwich Village, starred in a serial while runner-up to Dempsey, and in a film drama while heading the list.

Georges Carpentier, former European heavyweight champion, and ex-world's light-heavy title holder, has appeared in several Hollywood productions, and in recent years has divided his time between night-club dancing and the movie studios of Paris, as a dancing actor.

Max Baer, the Livermore Larruper, who lost the heavy leadership to Jeems Braddock, of Joisey, was featured in two Hollywood productions and announced he would become a permanent resident of the movie capital, but this announcement was made without taking the producers into his confidence, so the Baer fact was, the welcome sign was taken off the Hollywood doormat for him.

Benny Leonard, the New Yorker who was one of the best of all lightie champions, starred in several serials while topping the roll, and was also in several cinema drammers produced at Hollywood and Long Island. Since quitting the ring, he has been an atmosphere assistant in film production as well as doing some radio broadcasting.

Ted Kid Lewis, London Whitechaper who held the welter title and was later a middleweight and light-heavy, and who, with Jack Britton, of New York and Chicago, participated in a 24 chapter ring-serial in real not reel life, has been an extra at English studios, in addition to managing glove gyrators and serving as a referee. His right label is Gaston Mendeloff.

Dixie Kid, Memphis, Tenn. colored warrior, who was a welterweight

champ, and later a middleweight, and who died during 1936, in California had been an extra in pictures off and on for a decade. In reality, he was Aaron Brown. Kid Herman, of Chicago, who made an unsuccessful bid for the lightweight title when the late Joe Gans, Baltimore Negro, was champion, attached himself to Hollywood studios 20 years ago, as a staff worker.

Primo Carnera, gigantic Italian, who replaced Jack Sharkey, of Boston, as king of the heavies, and who was ousted by Max Baer, was featured in two Hollywood productions while champion or runner-up, and was also in a film serial.

Fidel LaBarba, of San Francisco, a former flyweight champion and lately battling as a featherweight, has been in minor rôles in several Hollywood productions, between fistic bookings.

Mickey Walker, former welter and middle champ, forsook Rumson, N. J., for Hollywood, and was in minor rôles in a number of pictures, during his four years as a citizen of the movie capital. He returned to Rumson in 1935, his movie future behind him.

Leo Houck, of Lancaster, Penn., one of the leading middleweights of 20 years ago, went to Hollywood a decade ago, and was in minor rôles in several pictures, before returning to Pennsylvania, to become trainer of Penn State athletic teams.

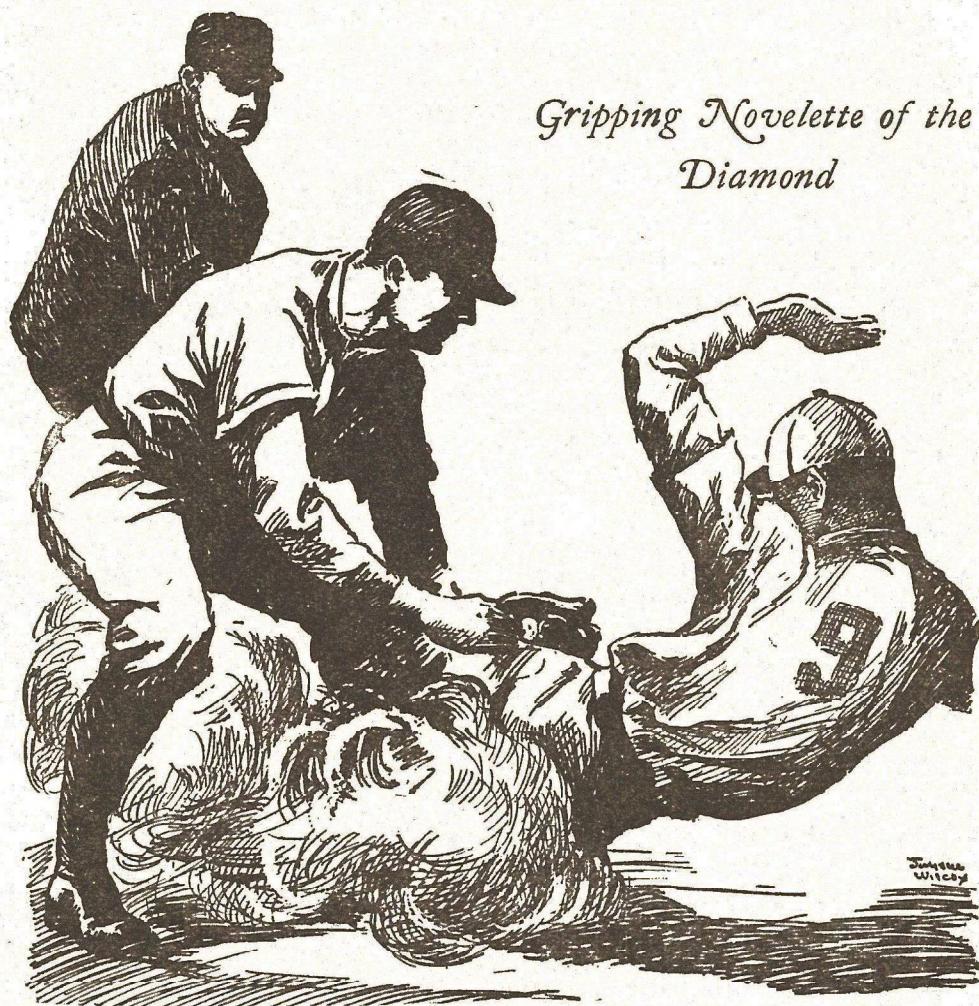
Jack Johnson, first colored man to win the heavyweight title in padded-glove pugilism, made several appearances before the camera while champion and subsequently.

Tommy Loughran, of Philadelphia, former light-heavyweight champion, and veteran campaigner among the heavies since relinquishing the cruiser title, was starred in a serial at Hollywood, and was also in two film dramas.



Hurler's Heritage

*Gripping Novelette of the
Diamond*



By Robert S. Fenton

Author of "Thunder on the Turf," etc.

Vic Burney's father had been a great ball player. But to make the Tanager team, Burney had to prove that he was no son of his father.

NAPOLEON must have felt mighty big and important at the battle of Austerlitz. When Charles Martel routed the Saracens at the battle of Tours, he felt that the world was his oyster. But it is doubtful if either of those great warriors felt as proud as did young Vic Burney

when he first donned the spangles of a big league ball club one winter down in Orlando.

The suit had not been made for him. One of the Tanager veterans had donated the soiled shirt which had long since been unworthy of even a brief visit to a laundry. Another Tanager had kicked in with a pair of old road pants that he had been using to polish the barrel of his skeet gun for about two years. Vic Burney's big chest threatened to burst the cloth of the shirt at any moment, and his legs looked a lot longer than they actually were, because the trousers ended abruptly just below the knees. But across the front of the ancient shirt were big red letters that spelled out a name: TANAGERS—and that was all Vic Burney cared about.

It was the year of the big drought in pitching talent. The preceding year, the crop of good catchers had been pretty slim. Every year there is a shortage of ivory of some kind despite the frantic peregrinations of hustling scouts.

Vic Burney, six feet two of corn-fed stature with a raw-boned though good-looking physiognomy, had arrived at the Tanagers' camp with a straw suitcase containing little more than an extra pair of shorts, an oil-soaked pitcher's glove, and a pair of spiked shoes. One hour after he had parked the suitcase at the hotel where the Tanagers were quartered, he was on his way to the ball park. He walked into the little clubhouse, carrying his spiked shoes and leather glove, and asked for Charlie Moran, the manager of the Tanagers.

A bulky, bronze-faced man, with crows' feet around his eyes and small patches of gray at the temples, looked up from where he was sitting and said to the rookie: "Moran's in town having a bad tooth fixed up. He won't be out for a while. You a ball player?"

"I'm Vic Burney," the rookie replied. "I got a letter to come down here. Mr. Harmon—he's a scout—"

"Yeah," the Tanager coach inter-

rupted. "Burney, huh? You're a pitcher." He paused while the other players wiped the grins off their faces. The name suddenly meant something to them. "There was another Burney one time. Was he—your father?"

It had come. Vic Burney had been waiting for it. A cold finger poked through the walls of his heart and jelled his blood a bit. He moistened his lips and nodded. He read the thoughts behind this old baseball wizard's keen, searching eyes, and a flare of defiance suddenly appeared in his own eyes.

"He was a mighty good pitcher, Rube Burney was," the rookie snapped. "No matter what other failings he had."

The seasoned coach held out his hard, calloused hand: "Sure, kid," he said.

Vic Burney took the hand and waited for the man to speak again.

"My name's Rip Whitman," the coach went on. Then he turned to the players and barked: "Get out there and start limberin' up. You squeak like a lot of rusty door hinges. Beat it!"

A SHORT while later Rip Whitman said: "Burney, maybe it's none of my business, but just how much hard stuff do you take?"

Young Vic flushed scarlet, and hot words welled to his lips. The curse of the Burneys was dogging him just as his mother had forecasted. She had urged her son to change his name before he left for Orlando, but the young man had been stubborn.

"I'm proud of the name," he had declared. "If I can't get along with it, I'll keep out of the game."

Whitman noted the storm clouds and hastily clipped: "That's all right, kid. Don't answer if you don't want to. I was just thinkin' of Moran. He won't keep a guy on this club five minutes if he ever sees him really under the weather." He stared at the young rookie, wondering at the discoloration on Burney's right cheek.

There was a deep scar over the would-be pitcher's eye. Whitman looked back over the years and saw a good-natured, swashbuckling type of baseball player with eyes the same color as this kid's. He and Rip Whitman had roomed together, and many a night the Rube had come in after the stroke of twelve, bearing the battle scars of a grog-shop brawl.

Vic said, explaining the scars: "I had an accident on the way here. I never touched a drop of the stuff in my life."

The coach smiled. "Okay, Burney. Now let's go out and see what you've got in that arm of yours. It looks like a long piece of whalebone with a slingshot attached to it. We need another good pitcher to help the old heavers. We think we've got one, Burney, but if you can show more stuff—"

"That's what I'm here for," the rookie replied, grinning now. He had donned the garments raked up by the coach and was ready to show.

The Tanners had finished fourth the previous year, owing to the fact that they had not had sufficient strength in the box. They were a fine looking club, thought the rookie. His wide eyes picked out faces that he had seen in the sporting sheets. There was Mike Coleman, the big catcher. The huge, bull-necked man in the batting cage looked like Moran's heaviest sticker, Pete Metosky. Over in front of the wooden stands, an array of mound workers were getting the kinks out their soupbones.

There was a tingling sensation running along Vic Burney's spine now. His tall, loose frame was aglow with a warm flood of pride as he followed the coach across the hard-packed diamond. He was in the big leagues! He would always be able to say that, whether he made the grade or not. But he was determined to make the grade. He was sure he had the stuff.

The gods of chance had to be thanked for sending the Tanager scout to the small town where he had

pitched for a factory team in a twilight league. That night he had been at top form and had breezed through the game with a one-hit performance. Afterward, Harmon, the scout, had looked him up and promised him a chance to twirl for the big show. The only hitch had been when Harmon had asked him if he was the son of Rube Burney. He had had to admit that he was, whereupon the scout had looked a little dubious. Nevertheless, here he was.

Rip Whitman took the rookie over to a tall, angular veteran of baseball who was watching the heavers with deadly interest. "Here's the rookie that Joe Harmon sent down. Look him over, Lefty."

"Okay," the coach of Moran's pitchers said crisply. He called to a man on the bench. Rip Whitman walked away, looking back once doubtfully. There had been no evidence of drink about Rube Burney's son, Whitman had to admit, but he would have liked the kid to explain the bruises on his face. He twisted an old bromide in his mind. "That which is bred in the soupbone can't be beaten out in the flesh."

BURNLEY took a new ball, rubbed it in his glove and got set to pitch. He wound up and blazed one down at his receiver, and the impact of the ball in the big mitt could be heard all over the empty park. The pitching coach called out sharply: "Want to throw that arm out the first day? Take it easy, feller, and don't be anxious. We've got a long time down here."

Vic nodded and eased up. For five minutes, he exercised that arm of his; and when Rip Whitman came over to the pitching mentor, there was a gleam in his eye such as must appear in the eye of a prospector who finds gold in his pan.

"He don't look bad, does he?" queried Whitman.

Lefty Toler knew a pitcher when he saw one. He had worked for Charlie

Moran for eight years and had helped him to win a pair of pennants. Under his breath he said: "He's got everything his old man had, Rip."

"Yeah? I hope not—not *everything*."

Lefty looked at the old Tanager coach and bit down hard on a match stick. "I forgot that," he admitted. "Well, we'll see, Rip. But Moran will get one good pitcher, you can depend on that. Either this boy or the one from Wichita will make the grade." He called to Vic Burney then and told him to take a rest. He would want Vic to pitch to the Tanager macers in a few minutes.

Vic Burney wiped sweat from his face and walked to the bench. Another man sat down beside him a few moments later and said: "You're new here, too, huh? I'm Chick Rudd. I pitched for Wichita last year and the year before that. Looks like you've got what it takes." He laughed wryly. "Up to now I figured I was set here. The rest of the new pitchers they brought down aren't worth a dime a dozen."

Vic grinned. "I sure want to stick here," he said. "Maybe they'll need a couple before they know it. Somebody's arm might go bad." He turned his head away from Rudd at the crack of a Tanager slugger's bat. The ball sailed far out into center to bank against the fence.

Rudd said: "That's the kind of guy we have to pitch to in this league. That was Pete Metosky. He hit .337 last year."

The rookie felt his hopes dwindle as he watched Moran's heavy artillery dig in and murder the horsehide that was served up to them. Absently he let his fingers stray over the cut on his face. His mind wandered back to the trip down from the hinterlands. A lot of things had happened to break the monotony of the journey. In a small Carolina town, the big bus had stopped to give the passengers a twenty-minute respite to stretch their legs and get something to eat. Vic

Burney did not like the looks of the eating place, so he wandered a couple of blocks down the street to find a drugstore. There he had a sandwich and a glass of milk.

Just as he was leaving the store a youngster came running across the street right in the path of a truck. A woman's scream sounding above the roar of the truck galvanized Vic Burney into action. He lunged toward the kid and threw him free of the wheels as brakes squealed. The truck was still rolling when it hit him. It sent him sprawling into the gutter. His head hit the curb. A crowd gathered and a couple of men helped him into the drugstore where his cut was dressed. During the ministrations, a young woman stood by with the scared little boy in her arms and thanked him tearfully many times. The ball player had refused to give his name before hurrying away to the bus stop. To his dismay, he had found the bus gone.

Whitman touched Vic Burney on the shoulder, and the rookie came out of his reverie. "Go out there and start warming up again, Burney. We're going to have the first real session to-day. Rudd, you start for the Yannigans." The coach walked out onto the diamond waving the players in from the outfield.

THE Tanagers had been waiting for real action and they milled around on the diamond, indulging in horseplay like a lot of high school kids. Two or three baseball writers came over and looked at Vic Burney with interest. They chatted with Whitman and the rookie felt his ears burn. He prayed that he would not get stage fright, in the event that he should be called in to pitch for an inning or two.

Somehow he knew what the baseball writers were thinking and a wave of heaviness crept over him. Like father, like son. Those writers would be wondering about that. Would they never forget Rube Burney? Forget the dead past? Why didn't they talk

about the good things that his father had done? Like that strike-out record he had hung up or those three years when he had helped the old Giants win the flag in the Senior Loop. No, they preferred to tell of Rube Burney's escapades and how he had left his family destitute through a predilection for strong drink.

The Yannigans were taking the field. Al Rudd, the rookie, was out there on the hill, waiting to blaze the ball past Moran's best hitters—if he could. The atmosphere of pennant chase was heavy in the air. Veterans were hopping around like youngsters. A smattering of local residents was trickling into the wooden stands to get a look at the first practice session.

Vic Burney thought: "Sure, I could've told 'em how I got my face banged up. But they wouldn't believe it. It'd sound like an alibi, and, anyway, how could I prove it? Well, I don't want to. They think I've been drinking—suspect I'm a chip off the old block. Let 'em think so."

After a first scoreless inning, Al Rudd began to bear down a little. He had four to go, and Pete Metosky was standing up there ready to take his cut. The Wichita rookie took his time and tried to make himself look good by whiffing the big macer. Rookies before him had held that same hope in their hearts. They had all gone back to the bushes with the terrific crack of Metosky's bat ringing in their ears.

Rip Whitman sat down on the bench and grinned when Rudd got Metosky into a hole. Two strikes and only one ball. Rudd, exuding confidence now, sent one in that was just above the big Pole's knees. Metosky swung. The ball went into deep left for three sacks. The Regulars began to punch at Rudd's offerings for the remainder of the inning. Three runs were across before the side was retired. The Yannigans were set down again by a Tanager veteran twirler and they went out to try to hold the score down. Rudd, a little shaky, allowed a hit and

two bases on balls after one was out.

"Go on in, kid," Rip Whitman said to Vic Burney.

"Me?" clipped the tackily dressed rookie.

"Who else?"

Vic got up from the bench, took his glove from his hip pocket, and strolled across the diamond. Rudd slammed down his glove and left the hill. Passing his replacement, he ground out: "Let's see you stop 'em, big boy." Rudd's tone was anything but friendly.

"Just tough luck," Vic tossed after the Wichita rookie. "Next time you'll—" Rudd did not look up, so Vic shrugged and went on to the hill. It seemed a dream for him to be there. For a few moments, he just stood and glared at the batter up there at the plate. A big leaguer in a big league training camp! Moran's regular second sacker, Bart Lamont, was waiting for Vic Burney to pitch to him. Stage fright came and gripped the novice pitcher. He pulled himself together and gripped the ball fiercely. The bags were filled. A hit here would not look good.

"Get going, Burney!" Whitman yelled. "Get going there."

A MAN walked across the outfield as Vic Burney wound up. He stopped momentarily when Bart Lamont swung all the way around to miss the pitch by a mile. The Yannigan receiver, a veteran of three years with Moran, grinned and tossed the ball back to the rookie.

To the batter he said: "Better blow the smoke away before you swing again, Bart."

Charlie Moran, Tanager pilot, resumed his walk to the bench. His jaw was set grimly, and the Yannigan fielders sensed that if anything went wrong this afternoon a few of them would be packing their grips to head back to the tall timbers. Going up to Rip Whitman, Moran threw out his jaw pugnaciously and said: "Who's the big palooka in there pitchin'?"

"That's Burney, Charlie. Harmon's find. Blew in this afternoon."

"Yeah? Did he have a bottle on his hip?" Moran cracked. He swung his head around just in time to see Lamont cut savagely at a third pitch that eluded his big stick by the width of a barn door. He bit out at the second sacker: "What were you doin' with your peepers this winter, Bart? You must've strained them doin' fancy work."

"Yeah? You've got a pitcher out there if you'll just look him over good," Lamont retorted and banged his bat against a heap of other maces.

Al Rudd bit his teeth hard together and dug his spikes into the turf. Charlie Moran took a seat and leaned far forward. He watched Vic Burney closely. Once he nodded his head and said: "The kid's got a lot of the Rube in him."

Out on the mound Vic Burney was beginning to get acclimated. He worked slowly on the next Regular hitter and forced him to lift a lofty foul to the first baseman. Two were gone. The next man looked like a horsehide murderer to the rookie. He took the veteran catcher's advice and kept them on the outside. But his third pitch came whistling back at him and he dropped flat to the dirt. Getting up, Vic saw the hitter throw his bat away with a fine display of Irish temper. The Yannigan second sacker had speared the drive, and the inning was over.

Vic Burney walked in to the bench. He hesitated when he saw the heavy-set man with Rip Whitman. Those square jaws and the blue growth of beard were familiar. Moran's eyes were famous, too—described by baseball writers as pieces of flint set in chunks of gray slate. Moran's cap was tilted back on his head, revealing the sandy-colored hair that grew abundantly on his massive head.

"Burney?" Moran shot at the twirler.

"Yes—yessir."

"You were lucky out there," the manager said. "Don't let it go to your head."

Vic Burney's face flamed, and he shook his head as he sat down. Al Rudd grinned. "I want to talk to you after we're through, Burney," Moran said next. "Be in my room at seven o'clock."

The rookie knew what was on Charlie Moran's mind. The same thing that was on everyone's mind. Resentment began to cut a swath through him. He was hardly aware of the Yannigan out there at the saucer trying to get a hit. His thoughts were on his mother a long distance away. She had forgiven Rube Burney for everything that had happened, and she had more reason to remember those things than anyone else.

Vic looked back over the years. He could see her by the window of their shabby flat working on lamp shades or aprons or anything that her thin fingers could fashion so as to keep a roof over her boy's head. Years of it had dimmed her eyes and had made her old before her time. But she wanted only one thing in payment from her son—a promise that he would never touch a drop of liquor. Vic Burney remembered the night when he had promised her with his hand on the family Bible. Her voice was clear to him as he sat on the bench in the Orlando ball park.

"Son, it's all I ask of you. If I ever smell a drop of whiskey on your breath, I'll want to die. It's a curse, son, that you've got to fight. You've got to fight more than just that. Those who knew your father, Vic—they'll never be quite sure of you. Promise me, son, that you'll never—"

AND so Vic Burney had promised and he would always keep that promise. Before he had left for the south, his mother had told him many things.

"I remember when Henry went away, Victor. I was very young and

very happy, then, son. Your father became famous—his name was always in the papers, and I was awfully proud. I've since wished that he had failed and had come back to me—the way he went away. But he didn't belong to me alone. A sporting idol belongs to the public. They worship him and a man has to be strong to keep a level head. Remember that, son."

Then Vic's mother had given him a picture to take with him, one of Rube Burney. "It's one I've always liked, son," she had said. "You picked it out of a box of candy one day when you were a little fellow. For a while you wouldn't believe it was your father. It's one of the best pictures of him I ever had—so young and smiling. Take it, son, and look at it often. It may help you—somehow—"

Charlie Moran's voice boomed and scattered the rookie's thoughts. "Wake up, Burney. Tain't bedtime yet. Get out there and pitch!"

"Yessir." Vic drew on his glove and sauntered to the hill.

Behind his back Moran said: "Just like the Rube. After a tough night. I'll never forget the day he went to sleep right out there in the box. We were playin' the Cubs—"

"Maybe if guys wouldn't keep remindin' the kid of those things," Whitman said testily, "he might turn out to be a good man around here. The kid can't help what his old man was, Charlie."

The manager of the Tanners spat into the dirt. Then he grinned. "Nope, you're right, Rip. We'll see. Kind of wish he had a lot of color like the Rube had. He'd pack in the customers if we could build him up. The writers—"

"They don't need any pushing," said Whitman. "They'll refresh everybody's memory without any help. It'll be tough on the kid."

Vic Burney set the Regulars down without another hit. In two innings he had struck out two batters, had walked none and allowed no hits. A

good start for a rookie. Al Rudd looked a little disgruntled when Vic Burney ambled along beside him after the work-out was halted.

"Don't be sure of yourself, kid," said Rudd. "I started out like that, too. Those heavy hitters will start figuring you out the next time. They'll begin to murder your stuff."

The rookie nodded. "I feel that way, too, Al," he grinned. "You don't fool big leaguers every time. But I'm warning you—I'm going to try and get that pitchin' job. I need a job that pays me better than working in a factory. Doctor's bills come high."

"Yeah?" Al Rudd wondered if the rookie was going to pull a sob story on Charlie Moran. Maybe he had a crippled brother or a sick wife. The thought brought a dry laugh to his throat. Charlie Moran had listened to rookies pull the sympathy angle often. "Married?" Al queried.

"No. How about you?"

"I got a wife and a kid," the other pitcher replied. "They come down with me and spent a few days before they went back home. I'd sure like to make the grade for them. They think I'm the best pitcher in the world."

Rube Burney's son said: "Why shouldn't they?"

VIC BURNNEY was assigned to a room with a utility shortstop, Speck Toth by name. The player was a tight-lipped man who said very little while the two were washing up for dinner. Vic was glad of the comparative silence, however. He was sick of answering certain questions. His face, reflected in the mirror as he shaved, still looked a little bad. When he was cleaned up, he told Toth that he was going out for a walk. He had twenty minutes before the dining room would be open.

Orlando was seething with the influx of tourists. Approaching dusk was wiping out a lot of the excessive heat of the day. Vic Burney thought of what it would mean to his mother

if he could stick with a big-league club. She could come down next year with him, could stop working her fingers to the bone, could recapture some of the happiness she had lost. He could buy her a little place down here where it was warm all the year round and where oranges would grow ripe outside her door. Strolling along, he built up his air castle to mammoth proportions.

On a busy corner he stopped to look in the window of an expensive shop. Feasting his eyes on a black silk dress, he said to himself: "She'll have one of those, too—silk, with lace around the neck, like she's always wanted."

The next minute, Vic Burney felt a heavy hand on his shoulder and he was spun halfway around. Instinctively, he brought up his guard, and his eyes bored into the tall, flashily dressed stranger who had ripped his day dreams to shreds. The face was vaguely familiar.

"So, wise guy," the man ground out, "we meet again, huh? I ought to blow your lights out!" His face seemed livid in contrast to the white linen suit and yellow shirt and tie that he wore. Shifty eyes flickered all over Vic's face but did not meet the ball player's steady gaze. The lips below a closely clipped mustache were the color of gray stone.

Vic Burney recognized the man then. He had met him on the train which he had hopped in High Point in the Carolinas after the bus had left him flat. The rookie had been watching a poker game in a club car, and this stranger had been winning most of the money. Of course, it had been none of his business, he knew, when the man in the linen suit had palmed an ace from the bottom of the pack. But somehow it had appeared to Vic Burney that the men who were losing could ill-afford to do so.

An unpleasant scene had followed when the baseball player had told the men what he had seen. The train con-

ductor had suggested in no uncertain terms that the light-fingered gentleman detrain at the next stop. The men who had been inveigled into the game did more than suggest it. They took their money back and invited Vic Burney to have a drink with them. The ball player had hurried out of the club car with the hawk-faced man's threats of reprisal ringing in his ears.

"You'd be liable to carry a gun," he said now to the card sharp, "but you wouldn't use it here. Keep moving. I don't want any trouble with you."

"Let me tell you something, kid. Keep your trap closed about me here," the man ground out, "or I'll come lookin' for you. Get that?"

"I've forgotten you ever lived," Vic Burney retorted and pushed the man's hand off his arm. "I'm a ball player and that's why I'm down here. What you do is your own business—even if it isn't on the level."

The card sharp grinned as the big pitcher walked hurriedly away. "A ball player, huh?" he slurred. "Well, what do you know about that?"

VIC BURNNEY had never eaten in a hotel dining room before. The quality of food, the names of the entrees on the menu, the pretty waitresses in starched dresses all combined to make his brain spin. When one of the waitresses smiled understandingly at his hesitation and told him what to order, he was more than grateful. The strands of golden hair that brushed his cheek as she bent over the menu in front of him felt as though they were charged with electricity.

He gazed after her in rapt attention until she disappeared through the swinging doors in one corner of the big dining room. He had had a girl back home once, but she had married someone else. After she had told him that she was not the kind to wait for a man to make a lot of money, Vic Burney had put the opposite sex out of his mind entirely.

After dinner, the rookie pitcher walked up to Charlie Moran's room. His knees felt a little wobbly, and he kept rehearsing in his mind what he would say to the fiery pilot. But when he found himself in Moran's presence, his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and he was speechless.

"Hello, Burney," said the manager, not unkindly. "You showed me some stuff out there today. Where did you get those bruises on your pan, kid? Walk into a door?" He laughed.

"I had an accident," the pitcher said stubbornly. "Tripped over a curb. I s'pose you think I was drunk. Everybody seems to want to believe that, because my father—"

"Aw, now, take it easy, kid," Moran cut in. "I knew your father. He was one of the greatest pitchers who ever lived. I'm going to tell you something. Rube Burney never took a drink until you came along, he told me. For years, he'd fought against the thirst for the stuff. He worried all the time that you might be born with the craving. He knew what a terrific battle it was to keep away from the stuff. He used to say to me: 'Charlie, I almost go crazy sometimes thinkin' about my kid. If he will only be strong enough to fight the thing that has been a curse to my father and his father before him.'"

"And then one night, kid, he got a taste of it. He'd pitched a no-hit game. We celebrated, and it was a lively crowd. The Rube took a drink, and it started him off on the rip-snorting career that all old baseball fans remember. Burney, I tell my men to drink if they want to—but not to let me catch them at it. I'm telling you the same. I hope you'll keep away from the stuff, Burney." He was looking at the bruised face in front of him as he spoke. Why was the rookie loath to talk about it?

"I've got to make good," the big busher told Moran. "I'm going to give you the best I've got in me. If that isn't good enough, I'll go home and

start getting ready for next year."

"Okay," said the manager. "That's all, then, kid."

Vic Burney went to his room. He was glad to find that Toth had gone out. He wanted to be left alone for a while. He reached into his pocket for the little leather folder in which he kept that tiny time-worn picture of his famous father. Then he remembered that he had put it in the pocket of the vest that he had discarded when he had hit the torrid belt. The vest was in the closet, but his exploring fingers failed to find the talisman. It must be lost, he thought—and with the thought, a feeling of misgiving assailed him. Like most ball players, Vic Burney had a superstitious bent and he wondered if the loss of the little picture would prove to be a bad omen.

A hunt through his straw suitcase failed to uncover it. He talked to himself, saying that it should make no difference. How could the image of a man help him in any way? It had not helped to ease his mother's burden. Years of struggle had made a half-blind little old lady out of her, scarred her fingers with needle pricks and bent her back so that she never stood up quite straight any more. No, Rube Burney could not help anybody any more.

THE Detroit Tanagers began to round into mid-season form at the end of the third week in training camp. Charlie Moran told the baseball writers that he had about made up his mind as to what the starting team would be on opening day. He needed one more good pitcher and he was pretty sure he had him. He would not say whether it was Al Rudd or Vic Burney until time came for weeding out the chaff.

On paper, both rookie pitchers looked promising. The son of Rube Burney seemed to have more control, and that was a big factor in his favor. Moran told the scribes that he

would start Vic Burney against the Boston Blue Sox when their Citrus League series opened on the following Saturday.

The baseball writers, memories jogged by the presence of Vic Burney, began to fill their columns with anecdotes pertaining to the new rookie's famous sire. They gave the avid fans many a laugh with accounts of the escapades of the old Rube when he was in his bibulous prime. The stuff was gall and wormwood to the rookie twirler, and one night he read a certain expert's stint with wrath. The fellow had spread it on a little too thickly.

Aware of the rage that boiled in Burney's eyes, Speck Toth said: "Forget it, kid! That guy can write what he wants and get away with it. Steve Wood's stuff is the baseball world's Bible."

Vic smothered his anger for a while, but when he reread Wood's stuff later, it seemed even more caustic and slurring. The writer had hinted that Charlie Moran was gambling not with a rookie twirler but with John Barleycorn. He had twisted the old bromide about blood being thicker than water, and no reader had any doubt about what he meant.

Toth had gone out, so he could not hold Vic back now. Vic thought of what his mother would say if she were to read that stuff. He knew it would almost kill her. Maybe Wood had never known what it was to work long hours for little pay and then turn almost all of it over to a doctor or druggist. If Wood's mother were sick, he would not have to worry about the expense of doctors and medicine. He was a well-paid columnist. Had Wood any right to sit in judgment on a man's father? To hold him up for ridicule before the world after he was dead? To speculate on whether the taste for strong brew had been passed on to that man's son? Anger and bitterness goading him, Vic Burney left his hotel room and went down into the lob-

by. It was about the time, he remembered, when the baseball writers gathered in the tap room for their nightly confab.

The man whose column was syndicated countrywide was standing at the bar when Vic Burney walked into the tap room. The smell of liquor seeped into the player's nostrils and made him feel sick. A scribe laughed. Steve Wood was the first to speak.

"It's young Rube Burney," he smirked. "Don't tell us the old devil's got you, kid?"

"Cut that, Wood!" Burney cracked. "I came down here to tell you to cut writing that stuff about a man who is dead. My father, you understand. I don't care for myself—I can fight back. But the wife of that man is still alive, Wood. Or doesn't a newspaperman have any sense of decency?"

Wood's face was ludicrous with stunned surprise. He swung away from the bar and then laughed in the rookie pitcher's face. "Listen, guy," he said, "we write what we want. Your old man was good copy. He still is. Get wise, Burney. We can make you or break you. We're building you up, chump. Giving you a lot of color."

Vic Burney ground out: "Well, I don't want it, Wood. You baseball writers can stand around and drink all night, every night of your lives and that's okay, huh? They drank with my Dad, too, and they ruined him. Then they stepped on him. Lay off him, Wood, or I'll beat you within an inch of your life."

STEVE WOOD had had just enough to give him a flare of courage. He stepped up to the big rookie and planted the palm of his hand against Vic Burney's shoulder. He pushed hard, and the ball player took two backward steps and collided with a man who was coming in. Anger boiled up in Vic Burney, and he started a punch at Wood's head—but it never landed. Charlie Moran had hold of his rookie

pitcher's arm. His voice shook the roof.

"Beat it, Burney! Get out of here. Can't keep away from the stuff, huh?"

"I never touched the stuff," the twirler ripped out. "I came down here to tell Wood—"

The columnist's face was deadly. "Yeah? You won't tell anybody, Burney. You'll find out you can't get tough with the newspaper boys. They can run you out of the Citrus League before you get started." He paused and grinned mockingly. "You'd better do some pitching against the Boston Club when they get here."

Burney stalked out of the place with mocking laughter following him into the street. A girl came out of a drugstore a few yards away, and he almost trampled her in his blind rage. He started to mumble an apology, then stopped.

"Oh, h-hello—you're—"

"Yes—I'm the girl who waits on your table, Mr. Burney."

The ball player's eyes became larger and larger as he stared at her. She looked exactly like all the smartly clad women who sojourned in Orlando during the winter season. In her white linen suit and blouse, she looked smaller, and her hair seemed even more golden.

In a humble voice he said: "I'd like to buy you some ice cream, Miss—er—"

"I'm Nancy Ryder, Mr. Burney. I'd like to have some ice cream."

Instantly, the ball player wished he had not spoken. He became sickeningly aware of his wrinkled suit which was much too heavy for the southern climate. It was not a very new suit, either, but he could not afford another right now. He was on trial at Orlando, working out with the Tanners for board and room. What little money he had would have to be conserved to get him back home.

But the trim young girl did not seem to mind because she said: "I

know a place where it is not very crowded, and we can talk as long as we like." Vic Burney allowed her to lead the way.

An hour later the ball player felt as though he had known Nancy Ryder for a long time. She had told him about herself, how she was working during the winter so that she could finish a course she had started in a northern college. Vic Burney found himself reciprocating with the tale of his own struggles. While he was talking, the girl kept her eyes on his sunburned face, and there was an expression of approval in their depths.

When he returned to the hotel that night, the rookie pitcher from the tall timbers felt that his world had started to change a lot. He felt as if he would not have to fight it out alone now. Lowered voices from a group in a far corner of the lobby failed to register with him.

A man said: "There's the big hick who told Steve Wood where to get off."

"Yeah. The big sucker! He'll be packin' his bag in a couple of days."

THE Boston Blue Sox drew a sizable crowd to the Tanners' park for the opening game of the Citrus League. In the improvised press coop sat Steve Wood watching Vic Burney warm up. A thin smile grew on his face as he leaned sidewise and tossed at another correspondent:

"The hick looks good. Maybe he'll have the last laugh."

"Yeah? These Blue Sox are hitters, Steve. The busher's going up against 'Dutch' Branner and they say the big southpaw is going to have his best year."

"That rube's got a lot to learn," Wood bit out. "A whole lot."

On the Tanager bench, Charlie Moran was eyeing Burney with a stony expression. The incident of the previous evening was bothering him. He kept remembering how he used to have to make the rounds of the hot

spots to find that kid's father on the eve of an important series. Shaking his head doubtfully, he glanced toward Al Rudd.

The game got under way. The Blue Sox lead-off man strode up to the platter and took a long look at the towering pitcher out there on the hill. Vic Burney realized that he was on a spot as he rubbed the ball in his glove. He felt Steve Wood's eyes boring into him. And Charlie Moran's fixed gaze was becoming a tangible thing that drove flat against him like a strong wind.

He fought off his nervousness and wound up. The ball left his hand, blazed by the Boston batter for a strike. On the next one, Rube Burney's son put a hop that bugged the batter's eyes out. The fans began to find voice when Vic struck out the Blue Sox lead-off man with three pitched balls. On his way to the bench, the veteran looked back at Moran's rookie.

He said: "There's a pitcher, Mick."

The second Boston batter reached first on an error. It was an easy roller that went through the shortstop's legs.

Charlie Moran growled: "We'll see if he's got a heart now. The two heaviest sluggers are going to try an' bang that run across."

Vic Burney took his time. His jaw muscles bulging a little, he got ready to pitch. He could not wind up now with a fast runner on the first sack. The Boston batter worked him to a two and two count. Burney took the backstop's signal and shot one in, high and inside. Crack! The pitcher threw up his glove and the blazing horsehide stuck to the palm. He whirled and threw to first, doubling up the base runner who had headed for second.

The customers howled their delight. Al Rudd's smile vanished from his face when Charlie Moran ground out: "A fielding pitcher, Rip. They're nice to have around, too."

The Boston Blue Sox clean-up man

tried to drive Vic Burney's offerings out of the park. His best effort was a weak pop-up to the Detroit third baseman, and the inning was over. Steve Wood said "Humph!" and jotted down the highlight of the inning, that pretty double killing.

Dutch Branner was in mid-season form. The Tanners could do nothing with his delivery in their half. Vic Burney went out onto the mound again. The sun beat down layer upon layer of enervating heat. Six more innings to go. Eighteen Boston sluggers to set down before the abbreviated training camp tussle would be over.

He wound up and threw the first one down the alley for a ball. There was a drop to his next pitch that broke fast, and the umpire called it right. The Blue Sox batter got set, his eyes showing bewilderment at the rookie's speed. He cut at the next one and fouled it for the second strike. Again Vic Burney tried for the outside corner, and the batter just managed to graze the horsehide. The catcher clung to the foul tip and the Hub swatter was out.

"Working pretty," gritted Steve Wood. "But he's still got a long way to go."

A single greeted Vic Burney on the next pitch. Charlie Moran kept chewing on his ever-present cud, the expression on his face unchanged. Vic took a hitch at his belt, dug his toe into the dirt, and consulted the rosin bag. Then he bore down and struck out the third Boston mace to face him. Again the crowd gave him a great hand, and Al Rudd began wondering if he would be pitching for Wichita again when the Western circuit started things going.

THE Blue Sox base runner went down on the rookie's second offering. Moran's veteran catcher nipped the stealer a foot off the keystone sack, and the Boston team was finished for that frame. Coming in to the bench, Vic Burney did not look at the

manager of the Tanagers. Charlie Moran spoke to him.

"Nice work, kid. The heat bother you?"

The rookie pitcher shook his head. He was thinking of Steve Wood. The sun could not put half the heat on him that Wood could.

The game, for a Citrus League contest, became surprisingly tight. By the end of the fourth, Branner had given but two hits. Vic Burney was amazing the experts with a one-hit performance. The crowd was beginning to howl for some fireworks. It was not a partisan crowd. They did not care who started the heavy artillery rolling.

With one gone in the first of the fifth, the breaks came to the Blue Sox. A rookie outfielder lost a towering fly in the sun and Vic Burney gritted his teeth and looked over the Blue Sox clean-up man. He seemed like a giant up there, wielding the trunk of a tree. The Tanager catcher gave Vic his signal. The Detroit infield began to chatter encouragement. Steve Wood waited, face inscrutable. Al Rudd leaned farther forward on the bench and dug his nails into the cloth at his knees.

The Boston slugger was not to be fooled every time he toed the saucer. He caught Vic Burney's fast ball and drove it just inside the first sack for two bases. The throw-in was fast and prevented the man who was on first from scoring. But there were two on now and only one down. There was a money hitter at the plate, the little Boston hot-corner guardian.

Charlie Moran said to Rip Whitman: "We'll see if he's got any guts now. Rudd, go out and warm up."

The son of Rube Burney looked toward the press coop and smiled thinly before he toed the rubber. He took his time until the crowd became a trifle impatient. The rookie put everything he had in his powerful right arm and blazed a strike by the batter, a straight fast ball that seemed to smoke as it banged into the catcher's

big mitt. Before the batter recovered, Burney blazed another straight on by.

The Blue Sox slugger was in a hole. Vic Burney threw two bad ones. Another one that was not quite so bad, and the overanxious Blue Sox batter swung at it and lifted a foul that the Tanager backstop gathered in. The crowd yelled for the rookie now.

One more to get. A single would score two runs. Vic Burney looked toward the bench and got his signal. He nodded and threw four balls to the Boston macer to fill the sacks. A weak hitter was coming up. The Blue Sox manager sent in a pinch hitter to cross the Detroit pilot. An old veteran who had been a great hitter in his time.

The baseball writers sensed the drama down there on the sun-baked diamond. A rookie fighting to make the grade. An old-timer trying to hang on as a pinch hitter. The veteran's eyes were not what they had been. The Tanager rookie's blinding speed sent him back to the bench as a strike-out victim, and the Orlando park rocked with the ovation of the few hundred spectators.

Moran said nothing. Al Rudd's lips were pressed tightly together as he threw warm-up pitches to a receiver. In the press coop, Steve Wood shook his head and began to think up a lot of things about Burney to tell the fans. They would have to be good as far as he could make out.

THE Detroit Club started their half with the head of the batting order out there taking his cut. He worked Branner for a pass. Speck Toth, batting in second spot, tried to beat out a bunt toward third but was caught by a step. But it was a neat sacrifice, and a potential score was waiting to be driven home by the two Tanager slingers, Chalmers and Metosky. Chalmers sent a booming fly to deep center that the fast Blue Sox outer gardener grabbed after a short run. It left things up to big Pete Metosky, who had yet to get a hit for the afternoon.

The heat seemed to be getting Dutch Branner. He tried to blaze a called first strike across the heart of the plate. The Pole swung at it, drove it against the right field fence, and tore around to third standing up. The Detroit team was in the lead. The Tanager first baseman caught the hitting fever and laced a single through the box to score Metosky. Branner was finished for the afternoon. The relief twirler forced the next Tanager batter to pop up to short, and the Tangers went out to the field with a two-run lead.

Charlie Moran called out: "That's enough for the day, Burney." He waved for Rudd to come on in and take the hill.

Al Rudd grinned and strode in from the bull pen. Two innings to go, that was all. His arm felt good, felt saturated with plenty of stuff. He was not with Wichita yet, not by a long shot.

The Boston Blue Sox came in for their cut with fire in their eyes. Experts had been stinging them for weeks, had been calling them a sure second division club.

Al Rudd, confident, went to work on the first man up there, a man who batted in eighth position, a weak hitter. After one bad ball, Rudd blazed two strikes across, and then tried to fool the little batter with a change of pace. The weak spot in the Blue Sox lineup became a stick of dynamite to Al Rudd. He drove the slow offering past short for a hit, and the crowd began to yell for a Boston uprising.

Al Rudd looked over the Boston relief pitcher and figured that he would be the first one to go down swinging. But Rudd figured wrong again. The tall batsman laid a perfect bunt down the first base line that Rudd chased after and juggled. Two were on and nobody out, and the head of the Blue Sox batting array up there with a wicked grin on his face. Rudd wiped sweat from his face, but there was a chill deep inside of him. He pitched

his head off to get the man to fly out to the first sacker. One gone. Rudd breathed more easily.

Vic Burney sat on the bench hoping that the Wichita kid would get out of the hole. But a Boston bat made a resounding crack that could be heard over in Daytona, and the ball was cutting grass between right and center for a pretty single. A run came in, and there were men on first and third. Rudd, working desperately, got a dangerous Boston hitter on a called third strike that brought a howl from the entire Blue Sox Club. Al Rudd had only the murderous Boston fourth position slugger to get by now. He looked at Charlie Moran and nodded thankfully. He passed the slugger and filled the sacks.

Vic Burney was working as hard with each pitch as was Rudd. Three and two went the count with the crowd tense. Then it happened. A wicked smash that went high and far over the fence in left for a home run. Four runs trickled across the plate. Charlie Moran signaled to Rudd, and the Wichita kid threw his glove across the grass savagely and trudged to the bench. He did not look at Vic Burney. He did not want him to see the brine that was in his eyes.

Steve Wood mumbled: "Well, it's a safe bet who stays with the Tangers now."

THE Boston Club went off the field with a five-to-two win. Vic Burney said to Al Rudd later, when the Tangers were heading for their hotel: "Forget it, Al. That can happen to anybody. You'll go out there tomorrow and stand 'em on their heads."

"Yeah? Maybe—"

The wires became hot that night with horsehide news for starved baseball fans in the frozen north. Morning papers would tell about Vic Burney's pitching against the Blue Sox. Steve Wood pounded out his stint at the hotel and took it to the telegraph office. The flash was:

The ghost walked here this afternoon in the Tanager Park. The ghost of old Rube Burney, the pitching wizard of another day. Vic Burney, chip off the old block as far as pitching talent is concerned, set the Boston Blue Sox down with a single hit in five innings. Burney, showing an amazing fire ball and an assortment of curves, left the hill with a two-to-nothing lead in his pocket. The rookie's control was practically perfect, and it is doubtful if a Boston marker would have crossed the pan if the two teams had played until the stars came out. Burney looks like the answer to Charlie Moran's prayer. Their pitching problem solved, the Tanagers look ripe for a rating high at the top when it comes to pennant prognostications.

Al Rudd, Wichita twirler, who showed plenty of promise at the start of the training grind, looked like just another pitcher after the Blue Sox had shelled him from the hill.

That night the baseball writers cornered Charlie Moran in the hotel and asked him straight from the shoulder when the axe was to fall on the over-stuffed Tanager roster.

The Detroit pilot was still noncommittal. "Inside of three days, you'll know the Tanager payroll for this year. I haven't decided yet who's going to go."

Vic Burney went out to a movie with Nancy that night. The girl told him how happy she was about the game he had pitched that afternoon. Vic saw very little of the double attraction he cared about. As time passed, the two moved closer together, and at the clinch that climaxed the love film, they were holding hands. The rookie took her back to the hotel afterward when, in response to his appeal, she explained that she was too tired to go for a little walk.

"I have to get up early, Vic," she said. "Some other night, though—soon. I'm a working girl, you know, and ball players eat a big breakfast."

Orlando's main street looked like the Garden of Eden to Vic Burney when he walked aimlessly on through a thinning crowd. He marveled that the world could change so suddenly. It looked as if he were set with the Detroit Club. He was almost sure

about Nancy Ryder. So engrossed was he in his thoughts of the girl that he did not see a hawk-faced man standing on a corner, a man clad in a white linen suit. The stranger's snaky fingers were toying with a purple tie. His eyes never left Vic Burney's broad back. Hate was written all over his face.

The baseball pitcher kept on walking until he found himself at the edge of town where the houses were set far apart. There was a gentle wind rustling the leaves of orange trees, and Vic Burney visualized a little place where his mother— At a slight noise in the bushes near the sidewalk, he half turned. Then something struck him heavily on the side of the head, and he remembered nothing for a long time.

VIC BURNNEY began to hear voices that seemed to be coming from far away. He opened his eyes and stared wildly around him. There was a nauseating smell creeping through his nostrils and into his brain. With a tremendous effort, he raised himself. His hands dug into something soft that he realized was a bed, as his brain gradually became clear. The faces around the bed began to take shape, and he recognized Charlie Moran—and Steve Wood, the sport columnist. Speck Toth was there also, eyeing him with a twist to his lips.

"Comin' around, huh?" Moran rasped. "You sure went to town on that hard stuff. Celebrating, eh, Burney? Yeah, sitting against a fence with a bottle in your lap—an empty bottle! You reeked so of whiskey that we could trace you by it."

Vic Burney was amazed: "L-look here, Mr. Moran—what're you saying? I—I" He saw a bottle on the table near his bed. "Take that away—the smell makes me—sick." He shut his eyes momentarily as a wave of nausea swept over him. "Listen, Mr. Moran. Tell me—"

"You were drunk, Burney," Charlie Moran growled. "Sickens you, does

it? I don't wonder. You killed almost a quart of the stuff. Passed out and banged your head against the fence. Well, sober up, Burney, and then get ready to pack."

Steve Wood laughed. "Another Rube Burney, eh? The papers'll eat this up. Yeah, and you can't expect them to give you a break."

Cold fingers were winding themselves around the rookie's heart and squeezing it dry. Through his bewilderment raced thoughts of what a little, gray-haired woman would think when she read— The ball player struggled out of bed and staggered toward Steve Wood. His voice shook violently as he spoke.

"Listen—I don't know—how this happened, honest to heaven, I don't. I was walking along when—please, Wood, don't put it in the paper. It'll kill her, do you hear? Listen, will you?"

"You asked for all you're goin' to get, Burney," the baseball writer clipped. "You made your bed—"

Vic Burney fell into a chair and held his head in his hand. A whirlpool of scattered thoughts spun around inside his aching head. He saw a hawk-faced man in a linen suit, and suspicion came to life. Looking up into Charlie Moran's face, he told about the incident in the train when he had shown up the card sharp and of the man's later threat. The manager of the Tanagers still harbored doubt in his eyes, and his face twitched a little with an expression of disbelief. Speck Toth coughed nervously and picked up the bottle. He looked at it and smiled significantly as he tossed it into a waste basket.

Vic Burney saw then that nobody believed him. Desperation wrung hot tears out of his eyes. He got up and faced Steve Wood. "I don't care what you do to me—whether you think I'm a liar or not. I'm only thinkin' of my mother. She'll die when she hears of this. She'll just—want to die—do you hear? Can't you understand? Can't you see what I'm telling you? I'll take

what's handed out to me here and say nothing. I'll pack up and go and let you think what you want to think. But she won't be able to stand it." He whirled on Charlie Moran and tears glistened in his eyes.

"Give me a break, please, Mr. Moran," he pleaded. "Tell them to keep it out of the papers. Until I can find the skunk who did this." He reeled and fell onto the bed, gagging. The fumes of the whiskey were turning his insides around.

Moran looked at Steve Wood. "I wish you'd try to hush this up, Steve," he said. "You've got a lot of influence with the boys. It won't do anybody any good to know why the kid was let out."

Steve Wood hesitated. He could not look at Vic Burney, but he said: "Okay, Charlie, but I can't vouch for the tabloids. They live on this kind of stuff. Their readers demand it. They love to dish it out to them. I'll do my best, though."

Vic Burney got to his feet again. "Thanks, Wood. Thanks. I wish I could tell you how much that means to— Please get out, will you? Everybody. I want to think. In the morning I'll go, Mr. Moran. But tonight, I'm sick—sick all over. I don't know why—this should happen to me just when—" Nancy Ryder's face swam before the ball player's tortured eyes, and the sickness inside of him became harder to bear.

WHEN Vic Burney was alone, he tried to assemble his thoughts. The hawk-faced man, he was sure, had made good his threat.

He got up and walked unsteadily across the room. He wanted to get near the window and suck in the sweet night air. Sitting at the window, Vic Burney felt the nausea gradually leave him.

He wondered where he would go now, wondered how anyone could help him. He felt his father near him and wished he had never lost that little picture of the man who had been fa-

mous in baseball several years ago. Somehow that picture had meant a lot to him. His mother had hoped that it might help him somehow. The rookie laughed bitterly and dropped his head onto his arms.

Early in the morning, Vic Burney left the hotel without breakfast. The only player he saw was Al Rudd, who happened to be at the desk asking for mail. The pitcher from Wichita called out some sort of good-bye, but Burney kept on going. A bus would be leaving at nine o'clock. He was going home.

Outside the hotel, a man said: "Kid, I want to talk with you." It was Steve Wood. Vic Burney told him to get whatever was on his mind out into the open in a hurry.

"There's a spot for you up in Gaynesboro if you want to light on it," Wood said, "A semi-pro outfit that would pay you pretty good dough to pitch for them. If you're interested, go and see Jack Pyle there."

Rube Burney's son thought a while, checked hot words that were on his tongue. Then: "Thanks. Maybe I will." He walked away, and Steve Wood shook his head slowly, and muttered: "What a heaver. It would have to be that way."

Vic Burney did not go home. He needed a job. He could smell the factory in which he had toiled up north, and the aroma was not good. Baseball fever had its way with him; and a few minutes later, after counting his money, he hopped a bus for Gaynesboro, Alabama.

The Gaynesboro Wildcats were a motley group of ball tossers. There was no age-limit to the team. If a man's legs could hold up, he could stick with the semi-pro outfit till he passed the half-century milestone, and there were a couple of kids on the club whose beards would not feel the bite of a razor for two or three more years.

Vic Burney walked into a little hotel in the torrid town and asked for Jack Pyle. He found him in an upstairs

room playing poker with several of his players. Pyle looked up when Vic Burney opened the door. He growled: "What's on your mind?" He paused, his eyes biting deep into Burney's tanned face. "Say! You're that rookie twirler from—"

Rube Burney's son grinned coldly and nodded. He said: "I'm looking for a pitching job. Steve Wood said you needed a pitcher."

Jack Pyle's face split into a pleased grin. "Do I? Heard about that binge you went on down at Orlando. The papers kind of softened it up, but we could all get what they meant. I don't care how much of the stuff you take as long as you're sober on the days that you work for me."

"No?" Vic Burney's tone was acid. There were words that boiled up in his throat that he fought to keep from pouring out through his tightly-set mouth. "Okay," he bit out, "if that's the way you feel about it. What kind of money will I get?"

"Twenty-five bucks a game, kid," Pyle grinned, "Sometimes we play two a week. Sound all right?"

"It has to," Vic Burney said, "When do I start?"

"Be out there tomorrow," Pyle said, "You need a few bucks?"

The Tanager exile laughed jerkily. "Maybe. But I don't want any dough yet. I might spend it in a saloon." He strode out with the laughter of the men in the room driving against his broad back.

The next day found Vic Burney toeing the rubber of the hilltop for the Gaynesboro Wildcats. It was a bumpy diamond. Rickety wooden stands flanked the right-field foul line. An old wire backstop swayed drunkenly far back of the wooden platter.

Pyle's infield brought a wry grin to Vic Burney's face. A man would have to pitch against any opposition to keep the score down. Rube Burney's son got down to business and began blazing the horsehide past Pyle's best hitters. At the end of twenty minutes, Pyle called the big right-hander in.

"That's enough, kid," he said. "Why did Charlie Moran ever let you out? Even if you stayed boiled half the time, you'd earn your keep in any man's ballyard."

A Wildcat macer, tired from swinging at a ball that he could not see, said: "Jack, you've got a drawing card here. When we finish our schedule this year, you'll have to raise our pay. We shouldn't lose any game if that bird pitches."

Back at Orlando, Charlie Moran was having his troubles. Two of his veteran heavers were finding it hard to get into condition. A bonesetter thumbed one of them down for three months, and the Tanager pilot began to curse the man who discovered strong brew. Al Rudd, he noticed, was losing a lot of the stuff he had brought to the training camp with him. The Wichita rookie went around as if something was weighing heavy on his mind. But Rudd was the only young pitcher that he had who possessed anything approaching big league caliber.

After a disastrous spring training game with the St. Louis Brownies, Charlie Moran said to big Pete Metosky: "I ought to cancel that game with the Gaynesboro Wildcats on the way up north. That Burney guy will work against us, and I'm trying to forget him."

A knock came on the door of the Tanager pilot's room. Moran yelled: "Come on in. Don't break the door down." Al Rudd came in. He said: "I want to see you, Mr. Moran."

"Yeah?" Moran barked, "Make it fast, Rudd! Maybe you can tell me what's bogging you down."

VIC BURNEY sat in a little furnished room the night before the game with Charlie Moran's Tanagers, a persistent fear gnawing at his heart. The news had traveled swiftly, that news about Rube Burney's son. If it had found its way into that little room up in that northern town,

a little gray-haired woman would be gripped in a despair blacker than any night.

The dread publicity was still hounding Rube Burney's son. The local ballyhooers had spread it on thick. Three thousands fans would ring the little playing field on the morrow. For what? To see a banished player try to square accounts with a team that had cast him out? To watch Charlie Moran's heavy sluggers blast the prize rookie out of the box and prove that he had been just a flash in the pan?

With that mis-matched infield behind him, Vic Burney knew that he would have to bear down with every pitch. To save a passably decent job in sandlot ball, he would have to fire every one over the platter with smoke on it. The Tanagers had kicked him out of big time. They could kick him further back along the horsehide road. Vic Burney gripped the brass bed rail with both hands and stared at a blank wall. He tried to read his future there, and when a vision did become manifest, it looked pretty bleak. He stopped thinking after a while, stopped looking ahead. Looking backward was bad enough.

The Gaynesboro ball park was packed with rabid fans. They came by every means of locomotion known to man. They came from the backwoods in old dilapidated carts. They came riding on mules. They came in out-moded cars and in shiny streamlined modern gas buggies to see Jack Pyle's new phenom steam them past the big-league sluggers. He had done it before. They wanted to see him do it again.

While the semi-pro outfit went through a practice session, Charlie Moran sat with his big timers on a long, rickety bench and stared at the big right-hander who wore a uniform of the Wildcats. A few minutes before he had passed close to Vic Burney and had said: "Hello kid. Good luck." The son of old Rube Burney had not answered him, and Charlie Moran had

kept on going with a dry smile playing on his face.

Vic Burney was burning them in. The big-league outfit laughed when the Wildcat catcher asked for a replacement. They watched him take off his mitt and rub the palm of his left hand. Metosky said: "The big boy's hot. He'll try out there today."

Charlie Moran spat into the dirt. "Yeah? What's he got to gain? You won't see any kind of pitching that you saw in Orlando. For twenty bucks or so a game, why should he pitch his arm off?" He looked at Al Rudd, grimaced and said: "I might use you today."

The Wichita rookie nodded. "I'll be ready."

The sandlot crowd clamored for action. They hurled good-natured gibes at the big-league players and yelled for Jack Pyle's new heaver to make monkeys out of them.

A GREAT roar welled up from the rickety stands when the big leaguers got set to start the game off. The Detroit lead-off man came up to the saucer and grinned as he looked down the alley at Vic Burney. The big rookie looked grim and did not return the smile. He looked over at Charlie Moran briefly, then got set to toss the first one in. The Tanager pilot forgot to chew on his cud of weed when Vic Burney blazed the first one across for a strike. A ripple of wonderment soughed from the lips of the crowd. Steve Wood, in an improvised press box, said: "That was speed with a capital S."

The Tanager lead-off man fouled the next two pitches, then swung hard at a third strike. He trudged to the bench, a look of bewilderment on his face. The next batter lifted a high foul to the Wildcat first sacker, and two were gone. Charlie Moran's heavy macers were coming up now.

Vic Burney, pitching with every last ounce of strength in his big frame finally got the batter to bite at a wide sweeping curve. The ball hit the end

of his bat and trickled toward short. Jack Pyle's ancient shortfield man came in for it and stumbled. The ball rolled out into short left, and the big leaguer reached first with plenty of time to spare.

"Some support," Charlie Moran clipped. "He'd better have a heart."

Big Pete Metosky faced Vic Burney, his big black bat making menacing passes at the air. The young pitcher wiped his brow with his sleeve and stepped off the mound. Charlie Moran did not like what he saw. It seemed as if Vic Burney cared little what Metosky would do. Then the big rookie was back there on the mound looking the mighty Pole over. He pitched without a wind-up, rifled a bullet-ball past Charlie Moran's clean-up man for a called strike. Metosky blinked and looked at the Wildcat catcher. He said: "How do you hold 'em?"

Moran was leaning forward now, every nerve twanging like plucked banjo strings.

Vic Burney's second pitch went crashing against the wooden stands for a foul. Metosky took a toe hold on the next one and fouled it to the same territory. He had to swing at all of them. Vic Burney was blazing them in and cutting the corners of the platter. The mighty Polish macer dug his spikes into the dirt and waited. Vic Burney burned the ball down the alley and Metosky swung. Too late. A great gleeful roar came from the crowd when Vic Burney tossed his glove aside and came on in to the Wildcat bench.

For four innings, the game was as tight as a big time pennant contest. Only three hits had crashed off the bats of the Wildcats against the Detroit veteran's pitching. Vic Burney, getting ragged support from the semi-pro infield, had been in trouble every inning. With his heart and soul, he had pitched himself out of them at the cost of only one run. The Detroit players themselves seemed to be rooting for the young pitcher, even though

they went out there to try to blast him off the rubber.

In the first of the fifth, Speck Toth, batting in sixth position for the Tangers, drove a grass-burner at the Wildcat second sacker. It looked like an easy out. A massed groan from the fans told everyone outside the park that it was not. The horsehide trickled past the keystone guardian and went out into center field. Speck Toth went into second in a cloud of dust.

Vic Burney turned and looked out toward second. Calmly, he swung around again to look over the next Moran clouter. Charlie Moran, on the bench, began to chew slowly on his cud of tobacco. His eyes were smiling, although his lips were firmly set. He was looking at pitching the like of which he had not seen for years. Not since Rube Burney had been around.

The big right-hander struck out the next batter. There were only two more to face. Both weak hitters. But weak hitters sometime upset the dope. A line-smash came back at Vic Burney and he leaped high into the air and felt the ball sting against the palm of his hand. Speck Toth was almost down to third. He wheeled and headed back to second as though his very life depended on his getting there. Vic Burney's throw nailed him by a yard, and the side was retired.

AS Vic Burney walked slowly away from the hilltop, Charlie Moran said: "What a man."

Rip Whitman shook his head and groaned. "I don't see why you let him go, Charlie. Even if he—"

The Tanger pilot said nothing as he watched the Wildcats poke at the offerings of his veteran heaver. The semi-pros got a man on in their half. The base-runner reached second on a passed ball. Vic Burney went up to the plate and waved a big mace at the Detroit twirler. He waited until he had worked the tiring veteran into a three and two hole, then he caught a grooved ball on his hickory war club

and smashed it against the rickety wooden fence out in left field. The score was tied. The sandlot crowd was plunged into wild delirium now. They pressed forward until their toes were close to the baselines. The ump called the game until they were chased back.

Charlie Moran pulled his veteran pitcher and sent in a top-notch hurler. The canny boxman retired the Wildcats without further damage.

Al Rudd stared at Vic Burney when the big pitcher strolled out to start the sixth. Rudd's face was drawn. His fingers absently toyed with the letters on the front of his shirt as if he were afraid they would vanish. Ever since the game had started, he had been doing that.

The Wildcat infield managed to work through the inning without an error. Vic Burney got Pete Metosky on strikes again, and the howl from the customers told him that he could own the town of Gaynesboro if he would only ask for it. Steve Wood sat in the press coop bemoaning the fact that the big right-hander would not be in the big baseball wars up north. He was copy—something to write about.

The seventh and the eighth went by with Vic Burney out there in the broiling sun, pitching his heart out. The score was still knotted, and the Gaynesboro crowd was begging for a Wildcat rally that would send the Detroit team off the diamond. But Charlie Moran's pitcher was in mid-season form, and Pyle's semi-pro macers had been going up to the plate and back again with monotonous regularity since the fifth.

The ninth. Vic Burney, out there on the hill, felt a yearning inside of him that cut like a knife. He would still be in the little town when the hectic battle was over. He would get twenty-five dollars a game. Maybe he would never see Rip Whitman or Lefty Toler again. Speck Toth was going to stick, he knew that. He would have liked to have a lot of friends like Speck. Vic Burney pawed the sweat from his eyes, but still his vision was blurred.

Vic Burney wound up and fooled Moran's first sacker with a ball that cut the outside corner. His arm was a little tired, and the sun had beat down upon him until his head throbbed sickeningly. But his speed had to be maintained. Let down a little, and Moran's macers would wreck the good work he had done. His heart was in every pitch, a heart that was heavy with bitterness and despair. Vic Burney had nothing to gain by setting the terrific pace. The curse of the Burneys had dropped him by the roadside.

Up in the stands, Nan Ryder sat with a little prayer on her lips. She prayed that those Tanager batters would not start a barrage of base hits. But if they did, it would not matter to her. She had come up to tell Vic Burney that he would never have to go on alone.

Charlie Moran could not look out at Vic Burney anymore. His eyes were on the lowering sun and they were a little misty. That strange smile still played on his face. The mighty roar of the crowd boiled out of the stands, and Moran looked to see one of his slingers coming back to the bench mouthing hot words about the bat that had failed him.

VIC BURNLEY took no more chances on the ragged infield. Every ball that came up to the platter was but a momentary blur as it rifled past the Tanager batsman. The sandlot mob was keeping up a steady roar when Vic Burney forced Moran's slugging right fielder to pop weakly to the box. Two gone. Only three scratch hits off the son of Rube Burney. Al Rudd knew he would not work that day. He left the bench and walked toward the little board structure that served as a clubhouse for Pyle's motley crew.

Charlie Moran sent in a pinch hitter. A money hitter who had been around for a long time. Vic Burney knew a long hit would beat him and he wound up slowly so that he could put every ounce of speed behind each

pitch. The pinch hitter fouled two off, looked at two bad ones while the crowd yelled for Vic Burney to set him down. The big right-hander took a deep breath, wiped more sweat from his face, and toed the rubber. He let loose a deliver that hit the catcher's mitt two seconds before Moran's slugger swung. The backstop went back on his haunches, sat down hard, but he held onto the ball. The game was over. Steve Wood, out in the press coop, said: "If Burney had had any support, the Tanagers would never have scored."

Vic Burney walked slowly into the little clubhouse. Moran's men poured into it. The Tanager manager said: "Burney, you showed the world that you had a heart today. A heart as big as a hogshead. Nobody could work like that against those heavy hitters unless their heart was in the game. Take off that shirt, kid. You're going back to Orlando. You're going to sign with the Tanagers and you'll go up north with the team. Rudd here wants to talk to you."

Vic Burney said: "Don't say that—unless you mean it, Mr. Moran."

"Tell him, Rudd," Moran said.

Rube Burney's son wondered why Al Rudd swallowed so hard before he spoke. Players crowded around those two players. Steve Wood shouldered his way through the sweaty, half-dressed players and pounded Vic Burney on the back. "Listen to Rudd, kid. You'll like what he's got to say."

Al Rudd held something out to Vic Burney. The right hander took it, and his mouth snapped open. It was the little colored picture of his father that he had taken out of a box of cheap candy years before.

"Yeah," Rudd said, "I got you run out of the game, Burney. I framed you. It was me who slugged you that night and planted the bottle on you. I wanted to stick. I—well, until I got that letter from my wife. She found that picture in the pocket of my kid's coat. The kid you snatched from in front of a truck." Rudd's voice broke

a little. "She wrote that it was you who did that, Burney. She recognized your picture in the papers. She reads Wood's stuff. He wrote about you that time you reported with your face bruised and cut. She remembered—"

Vic Burney felt like leaping toward the roof and yelling his head off. At the same time he felt pretty sorry for Rudd. Animosity for the man fled from him. Rudd went on: "I was a rotten skunk but not so rotten that I couldn't make things right for the guy who saved my kid. I'm glad you're staying with the team. I wish you would shake hands before I clear out, Vic. I guess I must have been nuts—"

Vic Burney could not have held malice for anyone at that moment. His heart was singing when he took Rudd's hand and gripped it hard.

"I guess you wanted to stay pretty bad, Al," he said, "I'm holding nothing against you. Maybe you'll come back in a couple of years—"

Al Rudd said no more. He hurried to get into his clothes. He wanted to get away from there as soon as he could. He knew what was in the minds of those big-league players. He could read it in their eyes.

Charlie Moran said, excitedly: "There's a story for you Steve. A dead man—old Rube Burney—comes back to save his kid. Write it." He turned to the happy Vic Burney. "You want

to sign, Burney? Six grand. Five hundred dollar bonus for every game you win over fifteen."

"I—I'd work for you guys—for nothin'," Vic Burney forced out, "I've got to get dressed. I want to get back to Orlando to see somebody—"

Charlie Moran said: "She's outside, kid. She followed us up here, and you'd better have some answer ready. Running out on her—"

"Huh? She—is?" Vic Burney said, "Let me get dressed here, please. I've got to hurry. Let me have room here."

Vic Burney found Nan Ryder standing near a gate a little way from the clubhouse. There was only one answer that he had to have ready. There was no storm brewing in the girl's dark eyes. They were soft with a promise that the road ahead was going to be a happy one for Rube Burney's son. When he walked slowly toward her, she said softly: "You were foolish, Vic. To think you could run away from me. I would have followed you wherever you went. You had—two strikes on me the moment—you first looked at me."

Vic Burney took her in his arms, kissed her. He said fearfully: "And to think I almost passed you up, Nan. Well, for the rest of my life, I'm going to look at you—over the home plate." And Vic Burney grinned and wondered if he did not hear some one laugh softly. His mother used to tell him how old Rube Burney laughed.

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These Games Called Sport

Strange and unique are the sources from which come our many forms of sport that have been almost unvarying through many centuries.

By Charles Kenmore Ulrich

WHERE THE DICE FIRST ROLLED

DICING was known to the Greeks as far back as 1300 B.C., although it is believed by scholars that the cubes were invented by Psalmedes a century later. Dicing was employed by dishonest adventurers for many years in fleecing the unwary, by loading the cubes with lead so that the largest numbers invariably showed.

The Romans and Greeks ordinarily used three dice when gambling. The high—three sixes—were called by the Greeks “Aphrodite”, while the low—three aces—were known as “The Dog”. The high was known to the Romans as “Venus”. Claudius, emperor of the Romans, was a dice addict, and he wrote a book on the sport. In later years, a law was enacted in Rome preventing any person in whose house dicing was practiced, from filing a suit at law to recover lost funds, even though dishonest practices were employed by the accused.

Dicing was generally played in the European courts. In Germany, after a gambler had lost all of his money and valuables by making bad throws to the dice, he was permitted by law to retrieve his lost fortune, if possible, by staking his personal liberty for a term of years. If he won the cast, his valuables were restored to him, but if he lost, he virtually became a slave to the victor for a period of from one to ten years.

How the American Indians learned of dicing is a mystery, but a European traveler in America in the early seventeenth century, wrote that he saw Indians in Virginia casting dice with English soldiers. Unable to procure numbered dice, many of the Indians used unnumbered cubes which they cast upon pieces of bark, upon which certain numbers from one to seven, had been painted.

The dice in common use today are iden-

tical with those found in the ruins of Thebes in Egypt, in Greece and Italy. In America, the game of “shooting craps” because of its speedy action, is quite popular in gambling circles, because the danger of being despoiled by loaded dice has been reduced to a minimum.

CROQUET, SOCIETY GAME, NOW SELDOM PLAYED

THE first game which afforded women of Europe and America the opportunity to engage in outdoor sports with men on an equal footing, was croquet. The game, as far as is known, was first played by men and women patients at a sanitarium in France, about 1828. So popular was it that English visitors introduced it in England in the early 1830's, and for many years it was the favorite pastime of Victorian society everywhere.

Introduced into the United States in the middle 1850's, it became one of the most popular of society games and held its vogue for many years. Clubs were formed both in England and America, and national tournaments resulted. The first English tournament was held in 1868, and in 1882 the National Croquet Association was formed in New York and held its first national tournament at Norwichtown, Conn., in the same year.

Under the rules then in vogue, croquet was a game which required far more skill and accuracy than it can lay claim to today. In the middle 1890's, the National Roque Association was formed.

For two decades following 1860, croquet was known in society as “the courting game”, because it offered so many opportunities to loving couples to do their wooing unobserved. In recent years, however, popular interest in the game has lapsed. The pastime is only occasionally indulged in, being considered rather too tame to suit the popular fancy.—C.K.U.

KING SOLOMON GAVE SHEBA FIRST AIRPLANE

IF anybody believes that the first airplane or glider was flown in this country when the Wright Brothers made their initial flight at Kittyhawk, N. C., on December 17, 1903, he has another guess coming.

It has been definitely established that when the Queen of Sheba visited the court of King Solomon, one summer's day a thousand years before the birth of Christ, he presented her with a flying machine, "a device that could traverse the air." How far this flying machine flew or whatever became of it, history fails to record. It probably didn't amount to much, and in any event, the story might have been a pipe dream.

But aerial navigation was dreamed of by many inventive minds in the intervening centuries. The celebrated Italian painter, Leonardo da Vinci, was perhaps the first European to give the subject any thought, and, after studying the flight of pigeons in Milan and Florence, he made the drawing of an airplane with heavy wings like those of a bird which is now on view in the library at Milan. It was deemed a beautiful visionary idea which never could be realized by mortal man. Human nature was the same in the fifteenth century that it is today, and that's why many brilliant ideas, too advanced to be fully appreciated, have been wasted in the last thousand years.

Aviation enlisted the support of many capable men, such as Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh, Glen H. Curtiss, John B. Moisant, Lieut. Alford J. Williams, U.S.N., and scores of others of lesser note, including many women. The first James Gordon Bennett balloon trophy was won by Lieut. Lahm, U. S. A., in 1906. In recent years, so many successful plane flights across the Atlantic have been accomplished, that popular interest in the achievements of aviators in this field, has been steadily waning.

BALANCE ON THE BRINY

THE natives of the Hawaiian Islands originated the thrilling sport of aquaplaning, which was introduced in the United States in 1912. A few years later, aquaplaning became popular at seaside resorts, more especially in Florida and California, so that it is now an adjunct of motor-boating.

By hitching the aquaplane to a motor boat, all the thrills of surf riding on inland waters are obtained. It then becomes merely a matter of balance for those indulging in the sport. The sport is recommended only to good swimmers who are able to protect themselves in the event of an unlucky spill. The most skilful votaries of the sport are the natives of the Hawaiian Islands, who ride the rollers from three to five miles while traveling at a speed of forty miles an hour.

WINGED SPORT

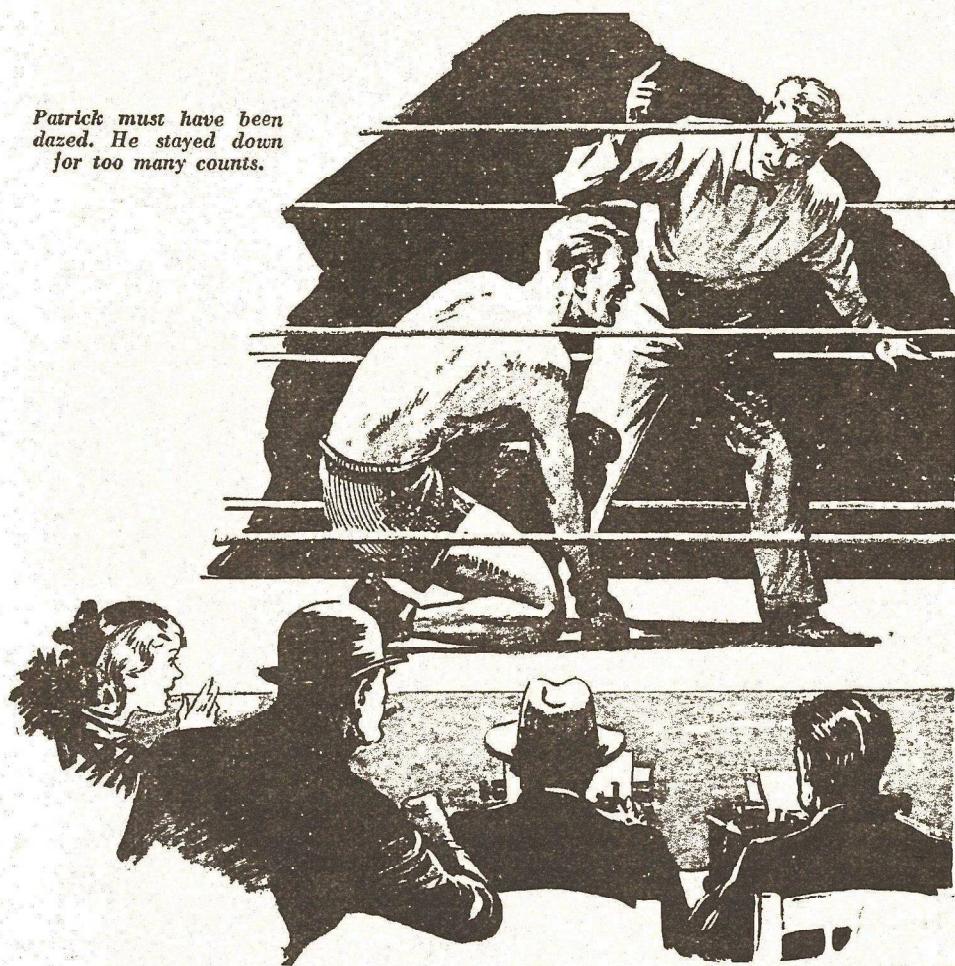
PIGEON shooting was first mentioned in an English publication in 1793. Live birds were invariably used for years, but the shortage of birds and the humane efforts of the authorities finally brought the practice to an end. In 1886, Charles Portlock, of Boston, invented the first trap and introduced glass balls for targets.

The first National Trap-shooting Tournament was held at New Orleans, La., in February, 1885. The first trap-shooting in the United States of which there is any record, was in 1831 at the Sportsman's Club in Cincinnati, O. The famous Long Island Club was organized about 1840. Captain H. Bogardus, of Elkhart, Ill., was champion wing shot of America for twenty-five years. The Clay target championship of 1934 was won by Walter Beaver, of Berwyn, Pa., with the amazing record of 199 targets out of 200. An international meet is held every winter at Monte Carlo.



The Bantam Scaramouche

Patrick must have been dazed. He stayed down for too many counts.



By John Scott Douglas

At twenty-one, Tommy Patrick was a game little bantam matched as a show against fighters much over his weight. And kindly Manager Grogan wanted to save him from slap-happy land via legitimate bantamweight route to the crown. But fiery Tommy was showing too strong a flare for fighting outside the ring.

BIG Jim Rogan glanced at his watch for the tenth time in an hour. Then he continued his feverish pacing of the hotel room.

"We ought to be at the Coliseum now!" he growled.

"I'll go over to that picture show and look again," said "Bull" Holstein, Rogan's barrel-shaped trainer.

"What's the use? We been there twice. Tommy ain't there."

Rogan whirled as the door opened. Tommy Patrick stood there, his head down, and his gray felt pulled low over one eye.

"Where've you been?" Rogan roared. "I let you take in a picture show to keep you from getting the heebie-jeebies, and you come back four hours later. Do you realize you got to fight in just forty-five minutes?"

"Let's go, then," said Tommy, without raising his head.

A sudden suspicion leapt into Rogan's mind. Tommy usually carried his head up and his hat back on his tousled, fiery-red head. Rogan strode across the room, jerked off his fighter's hat.

Young Patrick's left eye was swollen and discolored. His upper lip was cut and bore the stain of mercurochrome. He had a cut over his right eye and a black-and-blue spot at one side of his jaw. The air whistled sharply through Rogan's teeth.

"I spent nearly every cent I got getting you in shape, and the first time we got a chance to get some of it back, we got to default."

"That Mex won't bother me none, after the guy I just fought," Tommy said earnestly. "He must of weighed two-twenty-five, anyway."

"That settles it!" Rogan snorted, striding to the 'phone. "I got to call—"

Tommy Patrick flew across the room, snatching the instrument.

"Don't call it off, Jim. Honest, I feel swell!"

"You'd be disqualified, if you turned up looking—"

"They'll just think I've been sparing with Bull, and he got tough. You know I'm a peaceable kid, Jim. But I dropped in at a lunch wagon after the show, and this guy said the fights at the Coliseum weren't on the up-and-up. What could I do but sock him?"

"And then he gave you that shiner? Give me that 'phone, before—"

"I was going swell until he landed a haymaker on my jaw. Honest, Jim, I can take that Mex. He's a setup."

Jim Rogan hesitated. "Come on, then," he said gruffly. "If we didn't need that money so bad, I wouldn't chance your being decisioned the first time I put you in the ring. But we got to risk it."

In gloomy silence, Rogan settled back in the seat of the cab. This was what he got, he concluded bitterly, for taking on a bantamweight. No one would pay real money, anyway, for flea-sized fighters. Tommy Patrick, despite his gameness, would probably be sent into a prompt nose-dive by that tough, fast little Mexican bantam, Pablo Fuerte. Rogan prided himself on being hard-boiled, and then every so often he did something like buying Tommy's contract—which proved to the world he was the worst kind of a sentimental softie.

TOMMY'S contract had been held by Mike Callahan, a former partner of Rogan's. Callahan didn't understand fighters. He had made a side-show attraction of Tommy Patrick because he was game as they come. Matched him with broken-down featherweights and lightweights. The fans had eaten it up. A little fellow stepping out of his own class to fight bigger fighters held drama. But at twenty, Patrick was already becoming a punch-drunk stumblebum. Something in the youngster's infectious smile and clear-blue eyes had tugged at Rogan's heart.

He might have guessed from Callahan's eagerness to dispose of his contract, that there was something wrong somewhere. Callahan hadn't been going out of his way to do favors for Rogan since their partnership had broken up in a fist fight because Callahan was trying to ruin a good light-heavyweight, according to Rogan's viewpoint. And it hadn't softened Callahan's feelings any when

Rogan had made a title contender of that same light-heavy, using his own methods.

Rogan had gone to the Coliseum to watch a light-heavy who showed promise. The curtain-raiser made Rogan boil. After a bloody battering, Tommy Patrick had, by sheer gameness, fought a draw with a light-weight twenty pounds heavier.

While Rogan was still seething, the dicker had been made. He took Patrick up to his farm up the Hudson, where for six months Rogan had kept him in fresh air, permitting only light workouts. Patrick lost that punch-drunk look. His eye once more had sparkle. His footwork was faster, surer.

To Rogan's relief, Patrick was allowed to go in the ring. His condition caused some grumbling. But, after all, Tommy was rated as simply another ham-and-egger-game, yet without much class. Rogan thought he saw possibilities in Tommy no one else had seen. He visioned a champion; otherwise his investment was lost

There was little ballyhoo for a curtain-raiser. A brief announcement before the stolid, Indian-looking Mexican and Tommy Patrick shook hands and returned to their corners. Almost immediately the warning gong; then the clang that lifted both bantamweights to their feet.

Patrick clashed with the mahogany-colored fighter in the center of the ring. They peppered each other. Patrick's boxing was improved since his last appearance. He was blocking most of the blows on elbows and wrists. He grazed Pablo Fuerte's head with several lefts.

Patrick bore in. He smashed a left through to Fuerte's body, blocked a stinging left with his right glove, and jabbed again. The Mexican danced out. Patrick followed up, sparring.

The Mexican was cautious, backing away from the fighter with the tousled, maroon hair. Patrick kept

coming in, slightly crouched, his head well tucked in.

Fuerte blocked a left feint, and Patrick charged in, his right hammering in over the Mexican's heart like the thud of a basketball to the backboard. His left grazed Fuerte's head as the Mexican tried to cover up, and Patrick ducked under a right as he came in.

His fists pistoned—a left, a right, another left. Fuerte was knocked back on his heels. Patrick raged in, only to ram his already tender jaw on a wild right. He was staggered, knocked backward. Fuerte tore in, ripping through Tommy's guard. A blow on that swollen left eye!

Tommy Patrick winced, trying to block the barrage of lefts and rights. He was slammed back six steps when his opponent Firpoed a wild one through to his short-ribs. It straightened Patrick up, left him pawing at the air as he tried to catch his balance.

Fuerte rushed in, black eyes gleaming. Patrick split-seconded his escape, sidestepping and nailing the Mexican with a blistering right to the head. They were both rubber-legged as Tommy Patrick smashed in his left to Fuerte's stomach.

The Mexican clinched. The referee separated them. Tommy came in swinging. Fuerte sidestepped a left feint, but Tommy was slowed up by that one to his short ribs a few seconds before. He telegraphed his right. Fuerte ducked, and it only jarred him slightly. He tied up Patrick's hands. The referee pushed them apart.

Patrick bore in, carrying the fight to his opponent. But his punches packed less and less steam. He was telegraphing badly.

Jim Rogan watched, frowning. Just what he had expected. That kayak in the lunch wagon hadn't done Patrick any good. On endurance alone, the Mexican would beat Tommy. That would mean the short end of the purse on the next fight, and a

bantam didn't bring much, anyway, unless he could reach the top brackets.

Patrick continued carrying the fight to Fuerte until the closing seconds of the first round. Then Fuerte launched a terrific offensive, slammed in hot-headedly, raked Tommy Patrick's ribs with two sizzling lefts, and had him backwatering at the end when the gong rang.

BULL HOLSTEIN came through the ropes with his equipment. Tommy Patrick sank onto the stool. Rogan leaned over him.

"How you feel?"

"Swell!" Patrick sucked air into his lungs, grinning faintly. "Soon as I get my second wind—everything jake."

"Don't talk. Think you have a slight edge on this round. Lean back—relax."

Bull was working on Patrick's lean, glistening body. It was black-and-blue in several places Fuerte hadn't touched. Apparently the big fellow in the lunch wagon had done more damage than Patrick had mentioned.

Patrick sprang to his feet at the second bell, and Bull whipped away the stool. The redheaded bantam met Fuerte more than halfway across the ring. With no preliminaries at all, he ripped through the surprised Mexican's guard with a left to the head.

It rocked Fuerte. He shook his head, stepping back as Patrick came in. Another left was blocked, and Fuerte sneaked in two lefts to Patrick's short-ribs. It slowed Tommy Patrick momentarily, but he lashed in again, hammering—hammering—hammering....

Fuerte was blocking most of them. A left to the eye was like lighting the fuse to a charge of gunpowder. The fiery little Mexican stepped inside a looping left, taking it on his shoulder.

He drove in a left, a right, another

left to the body—forcing Patrick to give ground. But Fuerte was on top of him, Indian stoicism gone, Spanish fire blazing in angry eyes.

He pounded in a steaming right to Patrick's heart. Tommy's face twitched with pain, and his lips tightened in a hard, white line. He answered with two terrific jolts to the body, but the Mexican was tough as rawhide. Mahogany body glistening, he swept in, his arms blurring as he poured in blow after blow. Patrick was blocking, backwatering.

The crowd was on its feet, yelling, expecting the finish.

Fuerte smashed through Patrick's guard, exploding a right on his chin. The redhead went spinning.

The referee put himself between the excited Mexican and the fallen man, and started counting. Tommy Patrick shook his head. With his cut and bleeding mouth, he tried to form a smile—that smile which had tugged at Rogan's heart when he had seen Callahan making a stumblebum of the kid. Slowly, he raised his bruised and battered body from the floor. At the count of nine, he straightened with an effort.

The referee stepped aside. Fuerte rushed in to finish up.

The bell rang.

Patrick staggered toward the wrong corner, but the referee turned him about. Rogan leaned over him anxiously, as Bull went to work with a towel and smelling salts.

"Want me to throw in the sponge, Tommy?"

"What for?" he asked, with a flicker of spirit. "Right when I got that Mex going! That'd sure be silly!"

Rogan looked dubious, but decided to give Tommy another round. If it got no better, he wouldn't let his boy be mangled—not after he'd already been in one scrap with bare knucks that day....

Driven by that same valiant spirit, Patrick rushed out when the gong announced the third. But this time

Fuerte was equally eager. He knew it would take only a little more. Knockouts by bantams were comparatively rare, and it would give Pablo Fuerte a reputation in pugilistic circles.

Patrick met the rush, and the clash of fists knocked them both back. Fuerte less tired, recovered first. He took a right, which carried morphine with it, over his shoulder. The force behind the blow carried Patrick forward onto body blows that pounded mercilessly in, rocking him. He slammed his right into Fuerte's eyes as the Mexican danced out.

Fuerte shook his head, looking puzzled. He had given Patrick enough to send any other bantam he had ever fought writhing to the floor. But Patrick was still on his feet, though his legs looked wobbly.

Fuerte dived in again. But this time Tommy crossed a right to the head, blocking with his left. Staggered, the Mexican made the mistake of trying to clinch. Patrick avoided the arms trying to tie him up, crossed another right to the head. Then his left sank into Fuerte's stomach.

The Mexican caught Tommy with a wild right which half-spun him around, but he was right back, crossing again to the head, rocking Fuerte's head on his shoulders.

As the Mexican's hands went up to block the next one, he discovered that the right cross was but a feint. The real blow was a left to his stomach. Too late, his hands moved down. Quick as a flash, Tommy was back, rifling another cross to the head.

His uppercut caught Fuerte with a broken guard. The Mexican's head snapped back, and he went spinning from the force behind the blow.

The crowd roared. A bantam with a *kayo* punch!

TOMMY PATRICK was in bad shape, nevertheless, and Bull Holstein had to help him to his dressing room. He lay back with closed eyes, while Bull worked over him, and the

doctor patched his lip and applied iodine to other cuts. Afterwards, Rogan let him rest a while.

When the three of them went to dinner, Tommy Patrick seemed fully recovered in spirits, though he looked like a war-scarred veteran. Still deep in thought, Rogan didn't realize he'd tendered the cab driver a five-dollar bill and received change for one, until Patrick exploded:

"Get out of there, you big palooka! You can't short-change my boss and get away with it. Get out—before I pull you out!"

The tough-looking driver complied. He looked like a thug, and he probably had an hundred pound advantage of weight. But that meant nothing to Tommy Patrick. He sprang toward the driver, his fists clenched—and Rogan caught his arm, swinging him out of the way just in time. The driver made the mistake of trying to land one on the side of Patrick's jaw while he was being held helpless.

Bull Holstein doubled him up with a pile-driver right to the stomach. The breath was pounded out of the driver's body, and he sat down suddenly.

"You ought to be ashamed, a big guy like you," said Bull.

"Come on," Rogan snapped. "The rest of my change, and make it snappy."

"Sure," said the driver, sullenly, as he counted out four more bills.

Rogan steered Tommy Patrick into a booth in the rear of the restaurant, and dropped into the opposite seat. "Bull, sit beside Tommy. It will keep him from tearing out to start another fight."

Patrick looked injured. "I never started a fight in my life, Jim. But that driver short-changed you. What could I do but sock him?"

"Listen," growled Rogan, "you can't go around socking all the guys in this world who need it. Why," he asked suspiciously, "was Callahan so anxious to sell your contract to me?"

"I guess he thought I was washed

up. That was his real reason, though he claimed it was because I was a trouble-maker. You know that isn't true, Jim. I'm a peaceable kid—you know that. Some big guy is always starting something, like that fellow in the lunch wagon today, who practically called me a crook. What could I do but sock him?"

Jim Rogan groaned. "Always big guys?"

"Well, usually. They take advantage of the fact I'm small and peaceable. Callahan had no right to say I was a trouble-maker when it's always the other fellow who starts the trouble. But I admit I do have the worst luck that way."

"What'll it be?" asked the waiter.

"Nothing for me," said Rogan. "I lost my appetite." And under his breath, he muttered: "That crook, Callahan!"

"What'd Callahan do?" asked Patrick.

The next morning Bull Holstein came in with a paper as Rogan and Patrick were about to leave their room for breakfast.

"Say anything about Patrick?"

"Sure," said Bull. "Swell notice."

Rogan took the paper, but another story caught his eye first. Mike Callahan had bought an interest in Monty Flagg, the bantamweight champion—probably with some of the same money he'd paid for Tommy Patrick.

Rogan felt sick. Mike had certainly put it over on him this time. Rogan liked Patrick personally more than any fighter he had ever known. But as an investment, he was likely to be in the same class with a buggy manufacturing company.

Beneath the description of the main event was a cheering little squib which Rogan read aloud:

"Although he went into the ring suffering from training injuries, Tommy Patrick has made tremendous strides since falling into the capable hands of Jim Rogan. For the first time, the Golden Bantam showed real class."

Young Patrick uttered a strangled sound, picked up his hat, slammed it on his head, and strode furiously toward the door.

"Hey," Rogan snapped, "where are you going?"

Patrick turned, his eyes blazing. "To find that reporter!" he exploded. "You see what I mean? Some one's always starting trouble, when all I want is to be good natured and peaceful. What can I do but sock a guy who calls me a piece of corn?"

"Who called you a piece of corn? He meant you're a golden, or red-haired, bantamweight. You're getting places when a reporter will take the time to dope out a nickname for you."

Patrick looked dubious. "Well, if you're sure he wasn't taking a crack at me, I'll let it go this time. But I still think I ought to take a sock at a guy who calls me a Golden Bantam."

ON the strength of Tommy Patrick's showing against Fuerte, Rogan was able to sign up his fighter to meet the best bantam he had ever battled. The little Filipino, Jose Torio, had class, and he had decisively whipped the last six bantams he had met. The fight, moreover, was not a curtain-raiser; it was scheduled right before the main bout at Madison Square Garden. Jose Torio was the reason for this, of course, not Tommy Patrick.

Rogan had no illusions about the Filipino. Torio was good. Patrick had gotten the fight merely because Torio's manager was anxious to have his fighter pile up an impressive series of victories, so that Monty Flagg would be forced to give the Filipino a chance at the bantamweight championship. Torio was not at the top, yet, but he was going there.

Rogan knew it was a big gamble. Either it would put Patrick immediately up among the headline contenders; or it would give him a set-back from which he might not recover.

It was a tribute to Rogan's belief in Tommy Patrick that he was willing to sign for the fight.

Patrick had fought so many punch-drunk ham-and-egggers in heavier classes, while under Callahan's management, that he already had a terrific punch. What he needed most was speed, faster footwork, more training in boxing. And Rogan spared no pains. He had Patrick work out against the fastest bantam sparring partners he could find. Patrick improved daily.

But there was Patrick's natural inclination to fight anywhere and everywhere that had to be guarded against. Either Rogan or Bull Holstein was with him constantly. Several times they prevented fights with big men—fights which would have kept Patrick from meeting Jose Torio.

It was a constant strain. Rogan could never tell just when Patrick would get the idea that some one needed to be socked. It was with vast relief that the day of the fight arrived, and Patrick had been kept out of brawls. But Rogan's vigilance did not relax even then. He sent Patrick to the Garden, well in advance of the fight, so that his fighter would avoid crowds—and trouble. And he cautioned Bull Holstein to stay with Tommy every minute.

Thus temporarily relieved of responsibility, Rogan settled down to a leisurely dinner at the hotel. He had reached dessert when Bull Holstein charged into the dining room, his red face now almost purple.

"Good gosh!" Rogan exclaimed. "I told you—"

"I heard you, boss!" Holstein muttered. "But the police took Tommy away from me. He's down at the station now."

Rogan tossed down a bill as he rushed out to hail a cruising cab. "Make it snappy!" Rogan growled to the driver; then he asked Holstein tersely, "Well, what were you doing

that you allowed him to get into trouble?"

"Nothing," said Holstein. "It happened too fast. There was an accident on Broadway, and the cop told our driver to turn east toward Sixth. The driver tried to tell the cop he was taking Tommy to the Garden; that east was the wrong way. The cop got tough. Then, before I could stop him, Tommy hops out of the cab and asks the cop what's the big idea. The cop shoves his stick into Tommy's stomach and tells him to get back in his cab. Then Tommy goes into action, knocking down the cop. Everything happened at once after that. It took three cops to quiet him with their night-sticks."

Rogan groaned. "Then he's all battered up again?"

"That doesn't half describe it, boss!" Holstein looked glum.

"His big chance—gone!" Rogan leaned forward, his face grim. "Driver, stop! . . . Hop out, Bull, and hurry back to the Garden. Tell 'em Tommy won't be fighting tonight—or ever again, for me—"

"But, boss, Tommy didn't mean—"

"He never does!" Rogan clipped out.

ROGAN found Patrick in the hospital ward of the city jail. His head was heavily bandaged, but his smile was bright when he saw his manager.

"I knew you'd get me out, Jim. I told 'em I had to fight tonight, but they wouldn't listen."

"You've done enough fighting tonight," Rogan scowled. "What's more, I'd have to be the governor to get you out. You're charged with disorderly conduct, resisting an officer, assault and battery, using a dangerous weapon."

"The big liars! I only—"

"Fists are legally a dangerous weapon, when you're a professional pugilist. I'll try to get you out. Then we're washed up."

Patrick's clear-blue eyes brimmed. "Jim, I didn't mean to give you all this trouble. But when a fellow punches you in the stomach with a night-stick, what can you do but sock him?"

"That's your problem, not mine. You'll always be socking some one..."

"No, I won't, Jim. I'm as peaceable as they come, only—"

"Your peaceableness has just about broke me, trying to give you your chance, Tommy. It's lucky I still have my farm up-river to go to."

"Listen, Jim, I don't feel right having let you carry me all this time and not paying you back. You arrange some fights, and you can have all we make—except my board."

Rogan snorted. "There wouldn't be anything except board in any fights I could arrange for you now! After taking a runout powder on Torio—"

"I never ran out on any fight in my life!" Patrick exclaimed hotly.

IT was characteristic of Rogan, however, that when every hand was turned against Tommy Patrick, he couldn't throw him over. And that was just where Patrick stood when Rogan had spent the last of his money paying Patrick's fine. Rumor had it that Patrick had gotten cold feet; that his fight with a cop was his way of ducking a battle he knew he couldn't win—his weakness for the underdog made Rogan stick by.

At 21, almost in his prime, Tommy Patrick was a has-been. All Rogan could get for his fighter were curtain-raisers in the smaller clubs. Patrick won; but what prestige was there in beating worn-out bantams in ham-and-egg fights? Sometimes these fights would not pay what the three of them owed at their cheap hotel. At other times they had to live on Rogan's farm up-river, because there weren't even ham-and-egg fights to be had.

But all the time, Patrick was learning ring strategy, hardening, quickening his boxing and footwork. No

one could seem to appreciate this but Rogan. When he tried to get better fights, it was always thrown in his face that Patrick had ducked Torio.

As Rogan's star set, Callahan's rose. Monty Flagg was a fighting champion. He would fight as often as he could get bouts, and he won by such wide margins that he was beginning to exhaust the available material. The bantams of promise were avoiding Flagg because it was a quick way to end their ring career. There was such a thing as being too good.

One day Rogan was emerging from a cheap lunch counter when he bumped into Callahan. His former partner was wearing a diamond stick-pin, and the glare would have blinded a bat.

"How can you eat in such places?" Callahan asked, with a sniff of disgust.

"Don't pull that Mrs. Astor stuff on me," Rogan growled. "I knew you when you were lucky to have five cents for a cup of java."

Callahan pulled his long nose. "It isn't where you're from but where you go that counts. Do you still have that third-rate bantam I unloaded on you?"

"First-rate," said Rogan, half-heartedly. "Why? Monty Flagg looking for some one who isn't afraid to stand up to him?"

"That's what I always liked about you, Jim—your sense of humor. Imagine Monty fighting a stumble-bum who ducked a fight with Torio."

Rogan saw slightly red as Callahan went off chuckling.

"The stuck-up mick!" he muttered. "I'll pin back his ears yet!"

There was a call at the desk when Rogan reached his hotel, still seething. He rang the number—a number which had set his pulses pounding. It was Duke Merrill's number, and Merrill was promoter of the fight that night at the Coliseum. Rogan heard Merrill's deep, husky voice:

"Rogan? Say, Jimmy Garrett tore a ligament in his arm, training and he

was fighting Jose Torio tonight. I gotta have a substitute. Is Patrick in any sort of shape so he could put up at least a halfway convincing exhibition against Torio?"

"Well," said Rogan, keeping the elation out of his voice, "it all depends. I'll come over and talk terms."

"You can come over," snapped Merrill, "but not to talk terms. You're lucky to get a fight for that has-been, and you know it. I'm doing you a favor, not asking one."

Rogan swallowed his pride with an effort and didn't say what was in his mind to say. After all, he was lucky. And when he saw Duke Merrill, he had no complaint about terms.

Rogan and Bull Holstein almost handcuffed themselves to Tommy Patrick until they got him into the ring that night.

UNDER the fierce glare of the arc lights, Patrick looked hard and fit. Strong muscles rippled under skin tanned during rest periods on Rogan's farm. Frequent fights had toughened him. But the brown little Filipino looked equally tough, and he had not been fighting in small, smoke-filled clubs.

The little brown man came out at the bell with the assurance of a fighter going in against an inferior sparring partner. Patrick rushed out to meet him. He flicked Torio's head with a left, sidestepped a fast return, and smashed one in with his right. Torio blocked as he stepped out.

Patrick bore in, crouching. He kept jabbing with his left, blocking Torio's blows with his right.

Torio sailed in, his gloves flying. He took a smashing left on his glove, ripped a blazing right to Patrick's ribs. Patrick fought back as leather was poured at him. He caught them on arms and wrists, and jabbed with his left when he got the chance.

The Filipino seemed anxious to get the fight over quickly. He seemed to fully believe that Patrick had once

ducked a fight with him. Therefore Patrick must be afraid of him.

Torio broke through Patrick's guard with a left to the side of the jaw. Patrick was jarred. He shook his head, and tried to nail Torio with a right. But the little brown man danced out, only to dance back again, pouring in the leather. Again he looped a left to the side of the jaw, rocking Patrick.

Dark eyes narrowed, Torio rushed in to take advantage of Patrick's apparently dazed condition. As mad as he was dazed, Patrick met the rush with a left that was like the kick of a mule. His glove glanced off Torio's incoming blow, and smashed the Filipino's nose so hard that blood spurted.

Torio forgot to box. His left raked Patrick's head. In close, Patrick pounded the Filipino's ribs with sizzling lefts and rights. Torio countered with a pile-driver right, which Patrick just sidestepped and no more.

The crowd rose, shrieking, as the two bantams hammered and pounded each other in the center of the ring. Toe to toe, they stood slugging. Both were taking terrific punishment.

Then Patrick exploded a left to Torio's jaw when the infuriated Filipino left himself wide open. Torio's head snapped back. His guard came up—just in time to leave another opening for Patrick as he raged in, pounding in two savage blows to the stomach. Torio rocked Patrick with a wild one which made Tommy grunt.

But Patrick was back, rifling a cross to Torio's head, another right to the Filipino's stomach. His next right hurled Torio against the ropes. The referee pushed Patrick back as Torio struck the floor. He started the count. At "six," the gong sounded.

Torio's seconds jumped through the ropes, carrying the unconscious Filipino to his corner. They revived him after several seconds, but his eyes were still glazed and blank.

The referee walked to Patrick's corner. Patrick rose. The referee held

up his hand in sign of victory. The crowd roared its approval of the decision, a technical kayo.

Rogan saw Callahan several rows back, and rushed over to him.

"What do you think of Patrick now?" he exulted. "One-round kayo over the only bantam of any promise Flagg hasn't beaten!"

Callahan looked sour. "A fluke punch!" he snorted. "You'll have to show me more than that before I'll talk terms."

WHAT Callahan really meant was that he didn't want to talk terms at all. On the strength of that victory, Tommy Patrick was once more spoken of by sports writers as "The Golden Bantam." More and more space was devoted to him as he won his next three fights in impressive style, two on clear-cut decisions, and one more on a knockout. After each, Rogan tentatively broached the subject of a fight with Monty Flagg.

But Flagg's backers could always see one more logical contender ahead of Patrick. After the third fight, Rogan knew he was being given the run-around when Callahan suggested that Flagg couldn't meet Patrick until he had beaten Fuerte.

"But he blasted him on the canvas once!" Rogan shouted.

"Some time ago," Callahan said. "But he's improved since then. Anyhow, we won't talk about a fight between Patrick and Flagg until Patrick has disposed of Fuerte."

Rogan knew Flagg wasn't afraid to meet anyone in his class. It was simply that those who owned a share of him had had a taste of big money and weren't going to risk their investment. Monty Flagg was bringing in real money for testimonials, exhibitions, and radio appearances.

Rogan knew how to handle that. He called in all his reporter friends and had a heart-to-heart talk. He was, he told them, thinking of retiring Patrick because there was only one

man in his class he hadn't beaten, and the champ was afraid to meet Patrick. The reporters laughed, admitted they didn't believe a word of it, but said it would make good copy.

It made headlines. And it brought a call from Callahan two hours after the papers had hit the streets.

"Listen, you ape," Callahan yelled, "when was Monty Flagg afraid to meet any bantam at any time? He's demanding a fight."

"I thought he might," said Rogan. "I'll be right over."

After the papers had been signed, Rogan moved up to his farm with Holstein, Patrick, and three good sparring partners. It was easier to keep Patrick out of trouble in the country; though Rogan was almost convinced that Patrick had cooled down. Only twice since the Torio fight had Patrick offered to sock anyone, and in both incidents Rogan had been able to prevent hostilities.

FOR the first time, Patrick was on a headline event. The papers had given the fight a tremendous build-up, unusual for a bantamweight scrap. But both fighters had color.

Patrick had eaten early and was resting, back in the city, when the 'phone rang. Rogan answered and said: "All right, come up. But you can't stay more than a minute." He turned to Tommy Patrick. "It's Taylor, of the *Star*."

Patrick sat up, and when there was a knock, answered the door. The man standing there could have almost filled the doorway. He grinned.

"Say, Fiji Islander, where's that little palooka my slave driver wants me to interview?"

Tommy Patrick blew no trumpets before he went into battle; he just went. Before Rogan could even rise, Patrick's fist had smacked the big man in the eye. The big man, his grin gone as fast as if cold water had been poured down his neck, lifted Patrick with a right that packed dynamite.

The Golden Bantam crashed against a chair, splintering it.

Rogan and Holstein were rushing toward the door, saying nothing.

"I was only ribbing him," the big man said. "But when he socked me without warning, I did just what I would have done when I was inter-collegiate heavyweight boxing champ."

Rogan and Holstein still said nothing, though their clenched fists were eloquent. The big man dived toward the stairs as Rogan and Holstein tried to rush through the doorway, but found it wasn't big enough for both of them.

"Let him go!" Rogan exploded. "I knew this good luck couldn't last. And Tommy has to fight in just two hours."

"It's a frameup!" roared Holstein. "That guy wasn't no reporter. They can't punch like that."

Rogan said nothing as he stooped over Tommy Patrick's limp figure. Gently, he lifted him to the bed. Then he called a doctor.

PATRICK looked somewhat the worse for wear as he climbed through the ropes; but the crowd, not noticing, gave him a big hand.

In contrast, Monty Flagg, when he appeared, seemed to be in the pink of condition. There was a spring to the step of the curly, black-haired bantam.

Breen, the referee, made his announcements to the accompaniment of a roar from fans anxious for the battle of the bantams to begin. The Golden Bantam and the champion shook hands, went to their corners. The warning bell sounded, then the gong.

Both bantams sprang up with a rush that carried them to the center of the ring. Patrick took the offensive as Rogan had ordered him to do. It was his only chance—a quick knockout. He was going in too badly handicapped to match anyone as fast as Monty Flagg for fifteen rounds.

Patrick led with a left which flicked Flagg's head. Flagg had sidestepped right into the path of a sizzling right. Leather caught the blow, but the force behind it knocked the champion back a step. The crowd cheered as Patrick charged in, hammering Flagg's body with two quick, hard lefts.

Flagg jabbed, fanning air as Patrick danced out. Then he was back, probing for an opening in Flagg's armored defense. Time after time, Patrick flailed away with his left, trying to open a hole for his right.

Then he nailed the champion with a hard one in the stomach—another. As Flagg's wild swing missed Patrick's darting body, the Golden Bantam nailed the champion with a cross to the head.

Flagg caught the next right on his glove, but not the steaming left which blurred through to his short-ribs. Patrick was hammered back by a jolting right which jarred him to his toes. But he stormed in, his streaking gloves battering down Flagg's defense.

A left, a right cross to the head, another left to the stomach. . . .

Flagg grazed Patrick's head, but Patrick kept boring in, crouched, weaving, that wicked left streaking in again to the short-ribs. Flagg winced, blocked the right to his head, only to have Tommy Patrick's left catch him just above his trunks.

Patrick's right was just above the heart, with tremendous power behind it. Flagg tried to cover up, only to be blasted from his feet by a savage left cross to the head.

The crowd came to its feet as the champion went sprawling. Breen pushed Patrick back, but for a moment he didn't understand, and took a swing at the referee. Off in a neutral corner, the count began.

Flagg didn't look hurt, but he had a bulldog's scowl, under-jaw jutting out. He took time to recover. At the count of nine, he was on his feet.

Patrick crossed the ring with a rush, took three on wrists and elbows, and crossed to the head with a left that only grazed. Flagg slammed in, knocking Patrick back with a barrage of lefts and rights.

Patrick ended the charge, hammering a short one in to the champion's stomach, and thudded a right to the ribs before Flagg could touch him. Bulldog face red, Flagg swung a wild right, but Patrick took it over his shoulder, hammering the champion's stomach with two quick, hard lefts.

Flagg pounded Patrick back, catching him twice on the ribs, but the Golden Bantam was not to be denied. Sailing in, he nailed Flagg with another left in the stomach; and, as Flagg's guard momentarily dropped to stop the torment, he crossed swiftly to the head with a right to the jaw.

Flagg went spinning. He struck the canvas hard, shook his head. Again he took time for his head to clear. Again he was up at the count of nine. The crowd shrilled as Tommy Patrick charged.

He was knocked back on his heels by a left which exploded on his chin, but was not accurately timed. He stopped the next one, retaliating with a cross which Flagg took on his glove. The two toy bulldogs were pouring leather at each other when the gong sounded.

Tommy Patrick seemed to be in the worse shape as he walked to his corner. That knockout had drained him, and his attempt to follow Rogan's advice in the opening rounds had sapped all his reserves.

He lay back limply while his seconds worked over him.

"Go after him," Rogan snapped. "You had him on the carpet twice. This time you ought to deliver the *kayo*."

GRIT alone enabled Tommy Patrick to go sailing out with the fury he displayed at the second gong. He was like a winged thing as he ripped into Flagg, his blows coming

so fast that Rogan, in a ringside seat, couldn't always follow the punch.

He was spending everything he had in that round. He knew, as well as Rogan, that he couldn't go many more rounds.

He nailed Flagg with a right to the head, slammed his sweat-damp gloves into the champion's stomach until it seemed as if Flagg couldn't stand the punishment much longer. Rogan knew better. Something in force was missing from those apparently destructive blows of his battler. The fighting will was there, the blows were well-timed, but there wasn't quite enough steam when they landed. Patrick was fighting a losing battle against sapped strength.

Still, a left to the stomach, and another sizzling right cross to Flagg's head, sent the champion down for the third time. If Flagg had not been a champion, it is doubtful if Breen would have permitted what looked like a one-sided contest to continue. But the crowd would have torn the place to pieces if Flagg had lost his title while still willing to fight.

He took the count, red-faced but still apparently unhurt. Then he came up swinging, only to ram his head into a pile-driver right that almost curled him up again.

Flagg clinched. Breen separated the two bantams. Patrick came raging in, only to have his hands tied up again as Flagg stalled to recover his senses. The champion *swished* one in to Patrick's ribs as the referee pushed them apart. Breen warned Flagg.

Patrick stormed back to pursue his advantage. He rocked Flagg with a barrage of blows, which Flagg was able to partially block. Then the champion slipped through Patrick's guard, snapping his head back with a left loaded with T.N.T.

Patrick's feet were lifted out from under him, and he sat on the canvas, looking blank. The same blow from a little heavier man would have been a *kayo*, but it was still plenty for a man who had gone into the ring in

bad shape. Rogan, trying to raise his voice above the bellowing of the crowd, advised Tommy Patrick to take a nine count.

Patrick did not seem to have a clear idea of what he was doing as he staggered to his feet at the count of seven. Flagg was on top of him before he had fully straightened.

He had just time to block a right with his glove. Instinct drove him in punching. He hammered in a left, a right, another left. Flagg rocked him again with short jabs to the ribs. But Patrick's fury-charged attack forced Flagg to take the defensive as the challenger's fast-fisted blows rained on his stomach.

Patrick kept boring in, streaming leather at the champion, taking them on arms, elbows and shoulders, but never stopping. At the bell, he looked as if he were standing on rubber legs—as if he had been taking the punishment, not Flagg. But the champion had taken a terrific battering. He was bloody and bruised.

ROGAN'S heart sagged as his two men worked over Tommy Patrick. His boy had done his best to obey orders; but he just hadn't had enough strength left to put Flagg away. Tommy Patrick had won the first two rounds by wide margins. But with thirteen rounds to go, the fight was going to swing very quickly in the champion's direction.

With his championship at stake, Flagg put on the heat in the next round—and the tide began to turn. Patrick fought back every inch of the way, but he was telegraphing his punches, showing the effects of that *kayo* before the fight. Only his game refusal to acknowledge defeat held the round even.

Flagg won the next three rounds by as wide margins as Patrick had won the first two. He drove Patrick back, raining blows from all angles. Twice he had the challenger on the floor, but each time Patrick came back, fighting desperately against

Flagg's scientifically administered punishment.

After the sixth, Patrick lay back as limp as a rag against the post. Not even the feverish work of his seconds seemed to give him any life.

Abruptly, however, Patrick stiffened, his listless eyes becoming alert again. With a strangled sound, he sprang to his feet, heading toward the ropes in the direction of the press row. A big man with a shiner rose to his feet as Patrick started to climb through the ropes. Bull Holstein caught him just in time; and it was all both seconds could do to drag the struggling bantam back to his stool.

Rogan had climbed to the corner. "Do you want to be disqualified?" he bellowed.

"I got to sock that reporter!" Patrick blazed back. "Make these two guys let me go, Jim!"

"What do you mean—reporter?" Rogan yelled. "Do you mean Callahan's new partner?"

He had no time to say more. Even in the wild excitement which had sprung up, the timekeeper remembered the gong. At the second clang, Patrick went out of his corner as if he were on springs.

Flagg was there to meet him. He met the attack on his gloves, crossed to Patrick's head. Knocked back, Patrick stormed in, uttering a choked sound. He nailed Flagg with a looping left, took a blow on his elbow. A left to the stomach, a right which streaked through Flagg's guard to his jaw, another left to the stomach which almost doubled up the champion. . .

Flagg lashed out wildly with his right, catching Patrick on the side of the jaw. The referee tried to push him back. Patrick didn't wait even for the count to begin. With a sob of fury, he was on his feet again; and Flagg had been slowed down too much to take advantage of the knock-down.

Patrick ducked a left and hammered in a left to the stomach that sent the breath whistling through

Flagg's teeth. The champion struck out desperately, catching Patrick in the eye.

But it only seemed to infuriate the challenger. Another left to the stomach, with all the power of Patrick's fury-driven body behind it. Flagg staggered backward, trying to cover up.

Patrick raged in, battering down Flagg's guard with steaming, slashing blows. He broke through to the short-ribs with a left, which had so much steam behind it that it cut like a knife. Flagg rocked the in-coming battler with a roundhouse to the head, but Patrick did not seem to realize he had been hit, and Flagg had been unable to put much behind the blow.

Patrick hammered in three lefts, bringing down Flagg's guard. The champion tried to clinch, but Patrick pounded him back with that terrific left. And then his right came up—streaking for Flagg's jaw.

Flagg went spinning, turning over twice on the canvas from the power behind the blow. He raised himself half an inch, and then went limp, not stirring even after the referee had completed the count and raised Pat-

rick's hand in sign of victory. He was out, cold—insensible to the roaring bedlam.

CALLAHAN rushed into the new champion's dressing room, his black eyes snapping. "What do you mean by telling Patrick that Taylor was my new partner?" he raged. "Taylor was formerly an amateur boxer, and now he's covering boxing for the *Star*!"

"So he said," Rogan grinned. "But I had to give Tommy some incentive to fight, didn't I?"

Callahan let out a roar, and started toward Rogan with clenched fists.

"Wait, Mike!" Rogan's grin broadened. "I'm grateful to you for selling me the contract on the new champion, Tommy Patrick. To show there are no hard feelings, I'll take you out to dinner. Shake on it?"

Callahan hesitated. Then he managed a sickly smile and took Rogan's hand.

"Okay," he muttered. "But before we're through supper, you'll be trying to figure out some way to make me pay the check. I won't do it, d'you understand? I won't do it!"

In the Next Issue—

DIAMOND DYNAMO

Great Baseball Novel

By JOE ARCHIBALD

THE HARDBOILED HARRIER

Gripping Novelette

By ALEXIS ROSSOFF

THE BOXER REBELLION

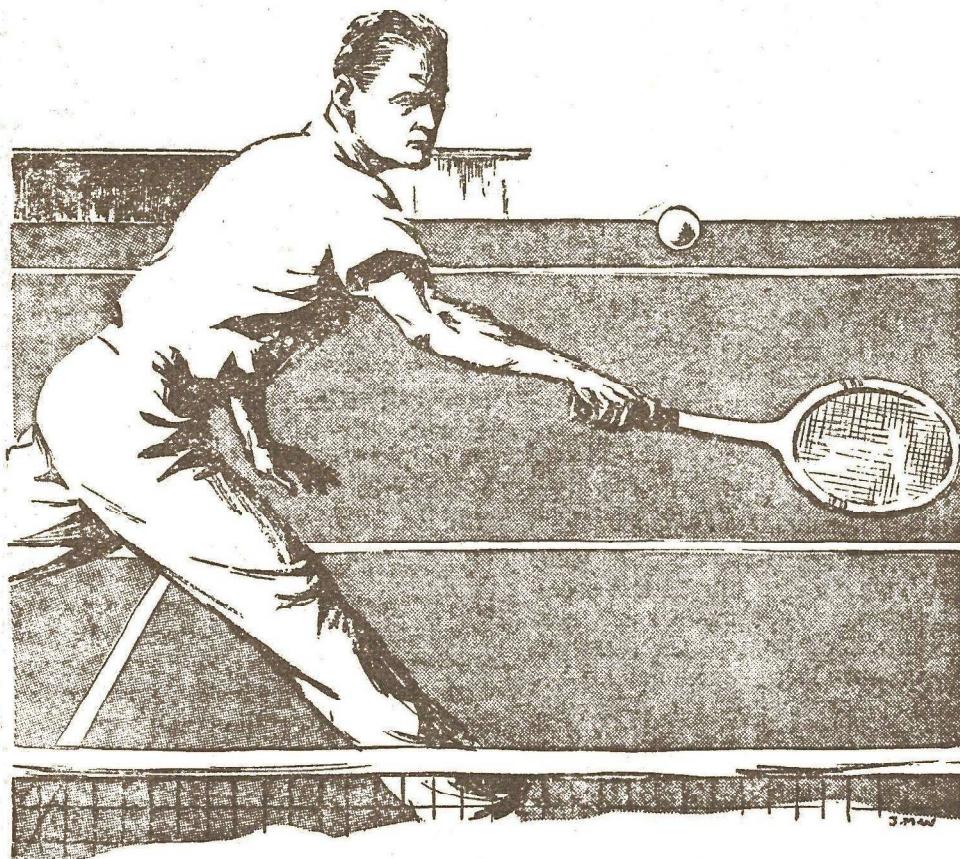
Boxing Novelette

By ROBERT S. FENTON

June ACE SPORTS

Out April 20th

Net Merchant



By Paul Chadwick

Author of "Net-Court Curse," etc.

Losing the grueling match against famous Rex Grant would hit deeply into the life of lovely Sue Chambers. And to lose it, Marty Kernan had to make only one error. But to win, he had to defeat a thousand and one unofficial opponents.

BOOS, hisses, and catcalls greeted Marty Kernan as he strode toward the white net bisecting the emerald green of Fairfax Stadium. Bronx cheers rose to a rasping chorus along the top seats of the gallery. Sound beat venomously against his

lean, white-clad body and rust-colored head. One fan yelled:

"We don't want you, Kernan! You sold us down the river once. Get out before we throw you out!"

Marty straightened, stared up at the packed seats above him. There was a

hint of moisture in his blue-gray eyes, but his lips were a pale slash above his fighter's chin. Not one friendly face in that whole crowd of nearly a thousand.

He stood there under the warm Virginia sun, the most unpopular man in Fairfax County's world of sport. The man who, a year before, had been branded a traitor to his club, a traitor to amateur tennis, and who had now come back to face the music. And there was plenty of it.

Marty knew that the people up there scowling down at him, booing, didn't give a damn about the ins and outs of his former pro rating. They weren't interested in all the technicalities of how he had got back his amateur status after Barry Chambers, Sue's father, had interceded for him with the U.S.L.T.A. They had nothing against professional tennis as such.

Under other circumstances, they might have cheered him as the prodigal returned. What made them condemn him, boo him, was the fact that in turning pro last year he had broken his solemn promise to the club committee. He had left the club to tour the country with Walden's Tennis Troupe, left it flat with no star to take his place. And the club had had the worst season in its history. Therefore he was despised, hated, unwelcome.

He looped his fingers around the handle of his racket. "They don't know that sometimes a guy has to have money," he muttered. "They don't know—about Nick."

He shook his head as though to shut out the echo of those jeers. He looked across the net at his opponent in the semi-finals, young Lee Carter. They stepped close and gripped hands formally; but there was stiffness in even Carter's manner. He stared at Marty with contempt.

The announcer called their names. "Mr. Carter and Mr. Kernan in the semi-finals of the Fairfax Spring Tournament. Are you ready, gentlemen?"

A fan cried: "Give it to him, Carter! Mop up the money-grabbing pro!" Another shouted: "We want sportsmen, not net merchants." Hisses for Marty raged again until the umpire sternly demanded quiet.

The play began with an undercurrent of tension. Prickles coursed up and down Marty Kernan's back. He knew that Sue Chambers was there somewhere, too, watching him coldly, no longer interested in him in spite of her father's change of heart. She didn't guess that he was playing only to help her father now—just as, a year ago, he had accepted Walden's financial offer only to save his brother, Nick, from going to prison. Sue was as proudly idealistic as she was lovely. As high-minded as she was romantic. He hadn't been able to explain even to her why he had suddenly betrayed his club to turn professional. His own loyalty to Nick had sealed his lips. And Sue, because she had idolized him as a perfect sportsman, had denounced him tearfully. On the rebound, in her emotional confusion, she had taken up with smiling, dashing, aristocratic Guy Beresford, gallant and reputedly wealthy playboy.

It was Marty's serve, and there was an unnatural jerkiness in his muscles as he drew back his racket and prepared to swing.

Swish—bong! He got the first one across, but without much placement, and lacking his customary speed. Carter, a lanky, powerful youngster with a smashing style of play, scooped it up neatly and whammed it back. His manner was arrogant, his eyes challenging. He seemed to sense that the crowd's hostility would get Marty Kernan's goat.

And this was happening. Marty had been affected by those jeers. His taut nerves were jumpy, ready to play him tricks. He met Carter's first rocketing return close to the service line, stroked forcefully and tried to follow the ball in toward the net. But Carter ran in, too, and made his second return before Marty was set to volley. A badly placed

foot threw Marty off balance. His resulting shot was a weak chop that failed to get over.

The fans yelled gloatingly. The umpire called: "Love-fifteen!" And in Marty's mind that first lost point appeared to set the game's tempo. He'd lose on errors if he wasn't careful, lose to an inferior player in the semi-finals just because the crowd was dead against him.

HE gritted his teeth. In the next serve, trying to hammer down his fears by sheer will power, he succeeded only in driving two balls into the net. "Double fault," sang the umpire. "The score is now love-thirty."

Marty took his time on the third, deliberately making himself relax a little. He got a clean, fast one across with some spin on it. It broke away from Carter. But the lanky player wasn't missing any tricks this afternoon. He got the ball on the tip of his racket, managed a clever draw shot that whisked over the net so close to Marty's sideline that the linesman had to squint twice to make sure it was good. He nodded, and the umpire called: "Love-forty."

The fans went wild. Marty was trembling as he prepared to serve. He'd known it would be tough going when he'd promised Sue's father he'd play, but he hadn't figured it would be quite as tough as this. Those weeks with Walden's Troupe should have taught him how to ignore the attitude of any crowd. But the home-town folks were different. Their hostility made him feel sick all over. Marty couldn't take it. For a moment white net, green grass, and blue sky seemed to blur.

Then he remembered. He hadn't entered the tournament just to make a comeback and regain his own lost prestige in the community. When he'd returned from his tour with Walden last fall, he'd made a vow that he wouldn't even attempt to get back into the club's favor. Except for an occasional

game for fun or exercise, he told himself, he was finished with tennis.

Then Mr. Chambers had come to him, begged him to enter the match. And Marty was playing tennis to help Mr. Chambers now. He was playing to pull the father of the girl he still loved out of a financial hole. He must eliminate Lee Carter so that he could meet Rex Grant, Guy Beresford's protégé, in the finals tomorrow. When he met Grant he must eliminate him, too, and let Mr. Chambers cash in on a five thousand dollar bet he'd made with Beresford.

That was Marty's sole motive for playing before the crowd that hated him, and for letting himself be publicly booed and humiliated. He must win the match so that Sue's father could get his money. Chambers hadn't told Marty just what sort of financial hole he was in. But Marty knew it must be crucial. Chambers wasn't a betting man. Since he had risked five thousand dollars on a tennis match, he must need cash desperately.

There was a scowl on Marty's face as he got his racket arm wound up for that fourth serve. Let the crowd howl. Let them call him any names they wanted. He'd promised Chambers he'd polish off Carter and he was going to do it.

He put steam into his stroke this time—steam and direction. The ball whizzed across the net, landing in the inside corner of Carter's court. Carter picked it up, but his footwork was a little unsteady. His return gave Marty a chance for a kill. Marty's racket descended on the ball like a falling meteor. The white pill hammered the turf at Carter's feet, and the umpire called: "Fifteen-forty."

There were no cheers this time. Marty's first point was greeted with cold silence—silence that hurt somehow even more than the jeers. He glanced toward the end of the stadium and got a glimpse of Sue Chambers sitting beside Beresford. She looked to Marty as beautiful as a picture, as fresh and sweet and proud as a South-

ern rose. And Guy Beresford was good-looking, too. They made a dashing pair. But frank dislike for Beresford as well as jealousy tugged at Marty's heart.

It was Beresford and his card playing that had made Marty's brother, Nick, "borrow" money from his firm that he couldn't pay back, so that Marty had had to accept Walden's offer in order to raise enough cash to save Nick from being found out and possibly sent to prison.

Sue knew that Beresford gambled. Her own father had warned her about it in Marty's presence. Marty vividly recalled that scene. For Sue had found an excuse for her new admirer. "He's a natural sportsman," she had said, "and likes his cards. But what of it? He's got plenty of money—it isn't that he's after. It's only the thrill of it." She had looked at Marty then. "At least Guy's never sold out his friends the way Marty did when he broke his promise to the club last spring." And Marty had remained silent in loyalty to Nick, flinching at the look of regretful disillusionment in Sue's dark eyes.

HE was silent now as he turned back to the play and grimly set himself to beat Lee Carter. He lost that first game when Carter picked up another point. And something of his panic returned when the crowd cheered wildly. Carter and he began a dogged, stubborn battle. They balanced game and game till the first set went to 11-9, with Carter finally taking it. There was perspiration on Marty's forehead. There was fear in his mind—two fears, in fact. Fear of the crowd's animosity. Fear that he would let Mr. Chambers down.

The two fears clashed and the stronger one prevailed. The Kernans didn't lay claim to aristocracy and they weren't rich. But they, too, had their pride. Marty had gone through hours of mental agony before he'd broken his promise to the club and turned professional in order to save

Nick. Now he must push on in the face of hostility so that he could keep his word to Mr. Chambers.

He had himself better in hand as the second game began. He concentrated on the play, forgot those staring faces. He battled Carter's lead with a dogged persistence. The next set went in his favor, 6-4. Again there was dead silence. It seemed to lie on Marty's back like an icy weight. It was more ominous than noisy disapproval. These people grudged him every point. They wanted him eliminated.

But in spite of that, in the face of Carter's savage, exhausting play and the crowd's unfriendliness, Marty crept ahead. He wasn't playing his best game. He felt recurrences of panic. He knew that if he did no better than this tomorrow, he didn't stand a show against Rex Grant. Yet he kept on fighting.

After two games in the third set had gone against him, Marty got the next two with clever placing and consistently good footwork. The fifth game he took with a high lob to Carter's back court after Carter had tried to outsmart him with a trick forehand. Carter staged a come-back on the sixth. He ran Marty ragged with a thunderbolt volley, hammered through his defenses by placing a ball just out of Marty's reach.

They were running neck and neck now. Sweat streamed off Marty's face. He got the next game by sheer driving will power; then the next. But Carter was putting everything he had into it. He tied Marty at five games each, tied him again at six and at seven. The crowd grew almost hysterical, cheering for Carter to win.

Marty drew in his belt, played with set face and tightly clutched racket. The fifteenth game was a net battle that ran to deuce three times before Marty took it. The sixteenth looked just as uncertain as the others when it started. Carter got the first two points, playing like a fury. Marty got the next on another lob. He tied Carter at thirty—all with a deft backhand to

the far corner of Carter's court. It was thirty-forty when Marty dribbled a sly one over the net in the midst of a fierce volley. He crashed through on the last point after the ball had gone back and forth across the net a dozen times. A lightning draw shot did the trick. The set ended 9-7 in Marty's favor. Weak and winded, Marty left the courts amid a stony and concerted silence which registered the crowd's bitter disappointment at his victory.

CHAMBERS, a small man with a bald head and large bright eyes with tired circles under them, met him inside the locker-room door. He was beaming. "I knew you'd do it, Marty! I knew you'd trim him, boy."

Marty shrugged. "I beat Carter, yes. But Carter isn't Grant. You saw what a tough time I had getting the best of him. It doesn't look so hot for tomorrow."

Chambers' face fell a little. He put his hand on Marty's shoulder, spoke huskily. "You want to get over being sensitive. Don't let the crowd's attitude ruffle you. And—don't let me down, boy. I'm depending on you—more than I want to say." Chambers peered up at Marty, and his voice went lower still. "It probably seems crazy to you that I'm staking so much money on a game of tennis, risking five thousand dollars. But when a man's desperate and knows that something must be done—"

Marty cut in: "I understand, Mr. Chambers. It doesn't seem crazy to me. I've been in trouble myself, needed money badly—and turned to tennis to get it. All I'm afraid of is that I won't be able to lick Grant. He's one of the best men in the state. You knew that when Beresford brought him down here."

"You're one of the best, too, Marty. If you fight manfully you'll come out on top. I'm saying again—don't let me down if you can help it."

Fight manfully! Those two words were ringing in Marty Kernan's head as he walked home from the club

through the long shadows of evening. It did seem odd when he thought about it that Mr. Chambers should be willing to pin his faith on a tennis match bet to avoid financial ruin. Odd—but people did strange things when panic drove them to it. And Marty promised himself that in the match with Grant tomorrow he would fight manfully.

He was still vowing to do his best, strengthening his will, when he went for a stroll after supper. And he was so preoccupied with his thoughts that he didn't notice for some time that there was a stranger following him. Then the scrape of furtive footsteps made him turn. The stranger, a tall, seedy-looking man with a red face, and dressed in a dark-blue suit, betrayed himself by starting visibly when Marty looked back. He recovered himself instantly. But Marty was suddenly suspicious. For some reason that he couldn't fathom, this stranger was spying on him.

MARTY decided to do a little experimenting. He zig-zagged across town, ducked around several corners and into several back streets. And, at the end of five minutes, he was certain that he was being shadowed. The stranger was more cautious about it now. But Marty couldn't shake him. When he stopped at a drug store to get a small coke the seedy man lounged watchfully down at the corner.

Marty was mad and annoyed. He came out of the drugstore, darted forward, but when he reached the corner the man had mysteriously gone. Marty grinned then. No use letting the thing get his goat. If the stranger started anything, Marty could be equally unpleasant. Tennis was no sissie's game. It built up whiplike speed and plenty of stamina and muscle.

But Marty wasn't prepared for the thing that happened five minutes later. As he cut back home through the soft Southern darkness, he was knocked off his feet by two burly figures that jumped him. They, too, must have

been following him. They had cut in ahead of him, waited in the shadows, and leaped in with flying fists from different angles.

Marty caught a gleam of metal for an instant. Starlight glimmered on brass knuckles. And the first blow caught him on the side of the head. He went down, smashing out with a quick fist at one of the faces looming over him. His own knuckles connected. The man staggered back. But the other came in. Before Marty could twist away, a second pair of brass knuckles laid open the skin on his forehead and multiplied the stars.

Only the quick turn of his head saved him from being knocked unconscious. And then, to Marty's amazement, a voice called out close by, and the two men who had started to beat him up plunged off into the gloom. The owner of the voice was the tall, seedy stranger, and he ran after them—leaving Marty mystified in the darkness, nursing his sore forehead, mopping it with a handkerchief as he sat up groggily.

What was it all about? If the two men with the brass knuckles had been staging a hold-up, who the hell was the stranger who had come to his rescue? He groaned suddenly and didn't think it was very funny. For the slice with the brass knuckles had cut deep. His head felt as though somebody was jabbing a knife into it. Holding the handkerchief to his forehead, he stumbled to the nearest doctor's office to get a little first-aid treatment. On the way, he cursed the bad luck that seemed to dog him. If the match with Grant had looked tough before, it now looked impossible. A chap didn't play his best tennis with his forehead cut open and his head bandaged.

THE crowd at the stadium that afternoon greeted Marty with silence when he stepped out on the court. Then the silence was punctuated by short bursts of laughter. The laughter swelled in volume as a thousand voices took it up. There was something comi-

cal about Marty's grim face peering out from under the white bandage. It might have stirred sympathy if Marty hadn't been in bad. But the crowd was still hostile. One wit voiced the general sentiment as he shouted down from the gallery. "Fixed yourself up with a swell alibi, didn't you, Kernan?"

Marty paid no attention to the jeers. There was a dull throb across his forehead that all the doctor's liniment hadn't been able to quiet. He was afraid that jumping around wasn't going to help it. And he could see, looking at Rex Grant, that he was going to need everything he had to hold his end up. For Guy Beresford had been a good picker. Grant was blond, rangy, powerful. He lounged around the court with the easy poise of a tiger.

He grinned at Marty, shook hands; but his yellowish eyes remained coldly appraising. He had smashed his way brilliantly up through all opposition in the semi-finals. Even if Marty hadn't been in bad grace, Grant would have been picked for the winner. For Grant belonged to the spectacular school. His game was said to be one of the most aggressive in the state. The Fairfax club had been delighted when Guy Beresford had introduced him and proposed him for membership. It was known that Beresford was backing him and building up his publicity as a Davis Cup Team aspirant.

Grant won the toss-up, and in the next five minutes Marty got a taste of the fastest serve he'd encountered since he'd left Walden's professionals. Grant had a projectile delivery, straight and true, that sent the ball sizzling across the net. The first time Marty tried to pick it up, his racket stung his fingers. His return was a sorry bungle. The crowd went wild.

Marty recalled some of the things Bill Walden had taught him. Use your forearm for a shock-absorber if you want to kill the speed of the fast ones. It worked on Grant's next cannon-ball service. Marty made a nice return; but the big, blond man fed him a trick

forehand draw shot that broke in against Marty's legs like a leaping rabbit. The gallery voiced its approval, and the umpire said: "Thirty-love."

In points, this game was beginning just like the one Marty had played with Carter yesterday. But he hadn't had that throbbing pain in his head then. And he wasn't up against a man of Grant's caliber.

Marty tried to quiet his mounting excitement. He let points slip away from him while he studied his opponent's game. There was no use in playing blindly. As long as he didn't know Grant's tricks, Grant would fool him. The blond man was smiling confidently now, sure of an easy victory. The crowd got happy, even losing some of its antagonism to Marty, now that his elimination seemed sure. Rex Grant appeared to be walking away with the match.

"Third game, first set, to Mr. Grant," droned the umpire. "The score is now three to nothing."

MARTY knew it was time to wake up, time to take advantage of some of the holes he had discovered in Grant's offensive. Grant's spins, for one thing, always broke in the same direction. And Grant's footwork wasn't as efficient as it was graceful. Grant was a gallery player with a distinct flare for the theatrical. But, outside of that, he was fast, dangerous, crafty; and Marty wondered if he had it in him to lick this blond tornado. Perhaps if things had been different, but with his aching head—

He stepped away from Grant's next return which had a poisonous slice on it. He anticipated which way the ball would break after it hit, and he was ready. With a controlled wrist movement, he got it and sent it up in a high lob that Grant wasn't expecting. The big man tried to get into a position to smash it. The fans yelled for a kill. But Grant got tangled up in his own feet and smacked the ball so far outside the court that it almost crowned the umpire.

Marty hammered in while Grant was still ruffled. He got two more points on Grant's serve, and the umpire said: "Love-forty." He won the game on the next play, acing his shot with fine placement close to Grant's service line. The score was now three to one, with Grant leading. Marty hoped that winning his first game might turn the tide. He fought bitterly, savagely for the next. It ran to deuce, went back and forth a couple of times, till the fans grew tense and silent. But Grant got it with a clever backhand on the tail-end of a volley. Four to one.

Perspiration was streaming off Marty's face now. The pain in his forehead was mounting. He suddenly realized that this set was lost, that it would take more energy than he was capable of to overcome the lead that Grant now had. Marty set himself not to win the present set, but to use all his skill in making Grant *work* for victory.

He came in close to the net, got the white ball going in a series of sledge-hammer volleys that made the racket-strings clatter and brought the fans to their feet. He placed each drive as far to the left or right of Grant as he could, so that the big man would have to cover a lot of territory. He had Grant panting before the volley ended. But Grant won the point by smashing straight down at Marty's feet.

Grant was worked up now, out for blood. While the fans cheered him on, he took the next game and the next.

Marty caught a glimpse of Mr. Chambers' face as he stopped to rinse out his mouth at the water cooler. Chambers' expression was almost tragic. Marty groaned inwardly, thinking of that five thousand dollars, thinking of what the loss of it would mean to Chambers.

He turned back to the game with a cold feeling in his heart. He couldn't let Chambers down. He must fight his way to victory. He began play with a smashing, desperate energy that soon tired him. He picked up the first game

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at the beginning of the second set, but Grant got the next and the next. The more excited Marty got, the more the cut in his head pained him. His blood, pumping through the wound that hadn't healed, made throbbing stabs of torment every instant. If only those two men with the brass knuckles hadn't waylaid him. If only he hadn't been facing Rex Grant with a handicap.

But he was, and Grant seemed to know it. For he was playing now with bland confidence. He got Marty's next serve, made a swift return to Marty's baseline, then, when Marty sent the ball back, Grant picked it up again and dribbled it over the net so craftily that Marty failed to get it. In trying to reach it he tripped, stumbled, ran full-tilt into the net.

The cord pulled the bandage away from his forehead. The cut began to bleed. Marty pushed the white cloth back in place fiercely, wincing with pain as he did so. The fans were silent as Marty picked himself up and they saw the stained bandage. This was no alibi then. That wasn't just a sweatband or a headache rag. Marty Kernan wasn't bluffing.

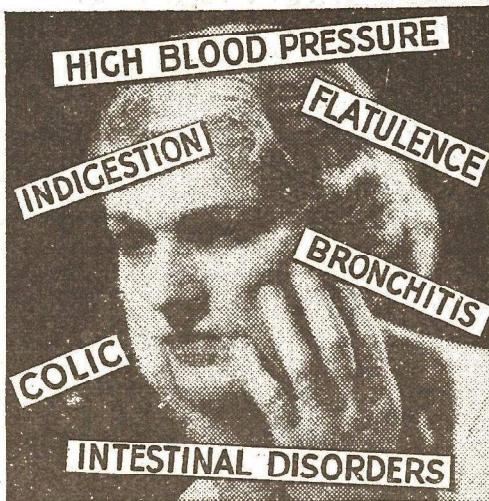
THE crowd that had been against him saw that Marty was fighting gamely. And he continued that fourth set with grim earnestness that began to arouse the fans' interest. He parried Grant's tricks, stepped away from his in-breaking slices, watched the big man like a hawk. They began another smashing volley in mid-court, slashing the ball back and forth across the net till it seemed a continuous white streak between the taut strings of their rackets. Grant tried another thunder-bolt drive at Marty's feet. Marty got his racket down and under in time to make a return that Grant wasn't expecting. He stabbed at the ball, flicked it back weakly, and it was Marty's turn to make a kill. He drove the white sphere to Grant's left, and Grant's backhand wasn't equal to it. "Deuce!" the umpire called.

Marty fought for the next two points. Grant, savage over his slip of a moment before, pressed in close to the net and began slamming balls at Marty wickedly. Then Grant strove to out-guess Marty in a sudden high lob. Marty jumped three feet off the grass to get that shot. He stretched to his full height, smashed down, and drove the ball almost between Grant's feet for a kill. It was Marty's advantage.

He waited, lynx-eyed, for the next one to come over, then ran into it and swung for a low grass-cutter. But Grant returned it. Marty nearly missed that one—nearly, but not quite. His return kicked up white dust on Grant's baseline, but it was good. There were bright spots dancing before his eyes as he got that point, and the game finished. But he had won it. He was slowly closing up Grant's lead in the second set. The big man was panting, red-faced now. Marty kept on hammering at him, putting everything he had into his play. He didn't quite know how he forged ahead. Each time he started to weaken a little, he recalled his promise to Mr. Chambers. And somehow he took that second set with a score of 6-4 against his big opponent.

He dashed some water on his stained bandage, faced Grant again across the court. He swayed on his feet a little. Unconsciously, he stood there gripping his racket like a warrior defending some weakening battle line. His white face. His red-stained bandage. There was something about these that got the crowd. When Marty went after his first point in this last set, applause broke out. Applause that made him lift his head suddenly, made his nostrils widen. It was for him, that clapping! This crowd that had been so hostile for the past sixty minutes was suddenly turning. Someone called out: "Good boy, Kernan!"

Perhaps it was that encouraging shout that made Marty pick up Grant's serve and stroke like a demon. The thrill of hearing the home crowd clap for him again, clap the way they used to, went to Marty's head for an in-



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stant. The thrill of it carried him along on a wave of exultation till he'd won three points.

But he couldn't keep it up. Emotion couldn't battle that torment so near his brain. He could fight, but only grimly, desperately. And he hardly heard the second round of applause when the umpire called: "Love-forty."

The next two he drove into the net, and the next Grant got with a savage draw shot after Marty had returned it. "Deuce," called the umpire.

HE got Grant's next ball and drove it low and hard into Grant's left service court, close to Grant's feet. Grant picked it up with a backhand. Marty ran in, stroked forward and down fiercely, and saw the net shiver. He groaned, knowing he had lost the point. But he got the next after a short volley, and it was deuce again. He must win this first game, he told himself; he must win it, or the match was lost—and so was Chambers' five thousand.

He did get it finally on a return that seemed so much dumb luck as skill. But the ball wouldn't have gone across if Marty hadn't been battling. And he had to let-up on his fast pace for the next few minutes, had to stop fighting Grant long enough to fight down the pain in his head. Grant grabbed two games while he was trying to pull himself together.

Half the time now, it seemed to Marty that he couldn't see the ball. It was there, he found it, returned it, but he seemed to be playing by instinct rather than design. He went on sheer will power when pain made his muscles weaken. He got the next game after a furious battle in mid-court. A smashing, four-minute volley, with two white-clad figures weaving across the green and with the white ball shuttling between them. Two to two now!

Marty's bandage was askew. His eyes were wild. His face was glistening. His throbbing, pain-lashed nerves shrieked that he couldn't keep this up

another second. But he kept it up—changed courts again and faced Grant unflinchingly. He knew that if Grant got a heavy lead on him now, it would be hopeless. When Grant got the next game, Marty had a momentary feeling that it was all over. His playing went to pieces till two points had slipped from him. Then he made another desperate rally, got back those two points and two more to boot, and they were neck and neck once more.

And now, in the last stretch, Marty battled as he never had before. He played so close to the line, so desperately at times that the fans stood up to watch him. And the tide of hostility that had been apparent today and yesterday and the day before, became a tide of roaring approval. Whatever Marty Kernan had done in the past, he was now forgiven. The Fairfax fans knew a game fighter when they saw one. They were suddenly, insanely proud of Marty.

And their cheers sounded an accompaniment to those last two games. The fifth went to deuce, and Marty almost lost it when Grant deliberately put his backhand to the test by driving to the farthest limit of Marty's left. For a moment, that return hung on the very edge of the net. When it dropped over and Grant failed to get it, the gallery cheered thunderously for Marty. Marty took the next point and the fifth game on his own serve, acing a ball with masterly placement.

The sixth game began with both players showing the strain. Grant grim-lipped and perspiring. Marty pale as a ghost. Grant took the first two points in the midst of volleys.

Grant's next ball seemed to burn through the air, but Marty got it, sent it looping high over the big man's head as Grant rushed too close to the net. Marty took the one that followed with a skillful backhand that Grant wasn't expecting. Grant bore down savagely. Marty put his last ounce of strength into the offensive, literally battered his way through Grant's defenses in a courageous burst of playing that kept

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the fans on their feet. Another aced ball. Then a placement after a shuttling volley, so breath-takingly swift and dexterous that Grant nearly lost his racket attempting a return. A sudden silence followed, and in that silence, before the cheers broke out, the umpire called: "Set and match to Mr. Kernan."

MARTY was conscious of several things then. Conscious of Grant shaking his hand formally. Conscious of the fans yelling, and of Mr. Chambers and two men coming toward him. Then Marty drew a shaky hand across his eyes. For one of the men was the seedy stranger who had tagged around after him the night before. And the other was Guy Beresford.

Beresford's face was dark, flushed, and his eyes were sly and scared-looking. The tall, seedy, stranger had him by the arm, seemed to be pulling him forward. They got close to Marty, and Mr. Chambers spoke in an excited whisper: "You did it just as I knew you would! You came through, Marty, in spite of that nasty cut—in spite of the fact that Guy tried to stop you."

"Guy?" Marty was still rubbing his eyes, looking from Beresford to the stranger. "Then that's why this bird was following me."

"No." Chambers grinned. "He's Tom Cole, a private detective, and he was following you because I hired him to do it. I thought Beresford would try something dirty—that's why I made that big bet with him. I wanted Cole to see that you didn't get hurt—and to track down anybody that Beresford hired to put you out of commission. Beresford's men jumped you, but Cole scared them off before they could cripple you. Now they're in the town lock-up, and Cole has their confessions."

"Then you'll collect from Beresford?" said Marty.

"No, I don't believe he's got five thousand. He never planned to pay me. His idea was to fix it so that Grant

would surely win. He's a professional gambler."

"But the financial trouble?" said Marty. "What'll you do about it?"

Chambers came close, laid his hand affectionately on Marty's arm. "You've pulled me through the only trouble I had—emotional trouble, worry over Sue because she seemed to be falling for this big crook. The more I warned her against him, the more she thought I was just being the cranky parent. She knew he gambled, but she thought it was just the sport he liked, not the money. I had to catch him red-handed, prove to Sue he was a crook. But I didn't dare tell you that, Marty. I knew you'd balk at showing up the man Sue was interested in if I laid my cards on the table. You disliked Beresford, too, but you'd have refused to expose a rival. So that's why I let you think I needed money. You're the kind of chap, Marty, who likes to help people. You'd risk your neck, sell your hide to get a friend or a relative out of a hole. I figured you'd do your damndest to win to help me, just the way you accepted Walden's offer to help your brother Nick."

"You know about that?" said Marty.

"Yes, Nick told me. And now what about Beresford? Are you going to prefer charges against him?"

Marty turned to the sleek "aristocrat" who gambled "just for the fun of it." He glared for a moment, then grinned. "I won't prosecute for this nice slice your tough guys gave me, Beresford, if you'll get out of Fairfax County and never show your million-dollar face here again. Now scream!"

Beresford strode away quickly. Chambers touched Marty's arm. "You might go and talk to Sue, boy, and ask her if she'd like to start over again with you where she was last year. The crowd was pulling for you in that last set when they saw what a fighter you were and what a sportsman—and I saw Sue shouting, too. It's none of my business, of course, but if you want to patch things up with her, I think you'll find her—er—receptive."

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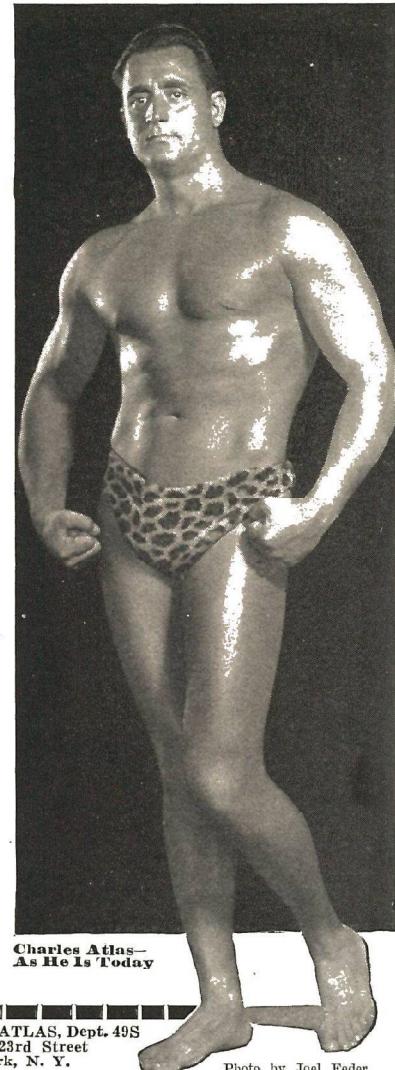
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