

Fifteen Stories

by
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Romance in the Roaring Forties

Only a rank sucker will think of taking two peeks at Dave the Dude's doll, because while Dave may stand for the first peek, figuring it is a mistake, it is a sure thing he will get sored up at the second peek, and Dave the Dude is certainly not a man to have sored up at you.

But this Waldo Winchester is one hundred per cent sucker, which is why he takes quite a number of peeks at Dave's doll. And what is more, she takes quite a number of peeks right back at him. And there you are. When a guy and a doll get to taking peeks back and forth at each other, why, there you are indeed.

This Waldo Winchester is a nice-looking young guy who writes pieces about Broadway for the Morning Item. He writes about the goings-on in night clubs, such as fights, and one thing and another, and also about who is running around with who, including guys and dolls.

Sometimes this is very embarrassing to people who may be married and are running around with people who are not married, but of course Waldo Winchester cannot be expected to ask one and all for their marriage certificates before he writes his pieces for the paper.

The chances are if Waldo Winchester knows Miss Billy Perry is Dave the Dude's doll, he will never take more than his first peek at her, but nobody tips him off until his second or third peek, and by this time Miss Billy Perry is taking her peeks back at him and Waldo Winchester is hooked.

In fact, he is plumb gone, and being a sucker, like I tell you, he does not care whose doll she is. Personally, I do not

blame him much, for Miss Billy Perry is worth a few peeks, especially when she is out on the floor of Miss Missouri Martin's Sixteen Hundred Club doing her tap dance. Still, I do not think the best tap-dancer that ever lives can make me take two peeks at her if I know she is Dave the Dude's doll, for Dave somehow thinks more than somewhat of his dolls.

He especially thinks plenty of Miss Billy Perry, and sends her fur coats, and diamond rings, and one thing and another, which she sends back to him at once, because it seems she does not take presents from guys. This is considered most surprising all along Broadway, but people figure the chances are she has some other angle.

Anyway, this does not keep Dave the Dude from liking her just the same, and so she is considered his doll by one and all, and is respected accordingly until this Waldo Winchester comes along.

It happens that he comes along while Dave the Dude is off in the Modoc on a little run down to the Bahamas to get some goods for his business, such as Scotch and champagne, and by the time Dave gets back Miss Billy Perry and Waldo Winchester are at the stage where they sit in corners between her numbers and hold hands.

Of course nobody tells Dave the Dude about this, because they do not wish to get him excited. Not even Miss Missouri Martin tells him, which is most unusual because Miss Missouri Martin, who is sometimes called 'Mizzoo' for short, tells everything she knows as soon as she knows it, which is very often before it happens.

You see, the idea is when Dave the Dude is excited he may blow somebody's brains out, and the chances are it will be nobody's brains but Waldo Winchester's, although some claim that Waldo Winchester has no brains or he will not be hanging around Dave the Dude's doll.

I know Dave is very, very fond of Miss Billy Perry, because I hear him talk to her several times, and he is most polite to her

and never gets out of line in her company by using cuss words, or anything like this. Furthermore, one night when One-eyed Solly Abrahams is a little stewed up he refers to Miss Billy Perry as a broad, meaning no harm whatever, for this is the way many of the boys speak of the dolls.

But right away Dave the Dude reaches across the table and bops One-eyed Solly right in the mouth, so everybody knows from then on that Dave thinks well of Miss Billy Perry. Of course Dave is always thinking fairly well of some doll as far as this goes, but it is seldom he gets to bopping guys in the mouth over them.

Well, one night what happens but Dave the Dude walks into the Sixteen Hundred Club, and there in the entrance, what does he see but this Waldo Winchester and Miss Billy Perry kissing each other back and forth friendly. Right away Dave reaches for the old equalizer to shoot Waldo Winchester, but it seems Dave does not happen to have the old equalizer with him, not expecting to have to shoot anybody this particular evening.

So Dave the Dude walks over and, as Waldo Winchester hears him corning and lets go his strangle-hold on Miss Billy Perry, Dave nails him with a big right hand on the chin. I will say for Dave the Dude that he is a fair puncher with his right hand, though his left is not so good, and he knocks Waldo Winchester bow-legged. In fact, Waldo folds right up on the floor.

Well, Miss Billy Perry lets out a screech you can hear clear to the Battery and runs over to where Waldo Winchester lights, and falls on top of him squalling very loud. All anybody can make out of what she says is that Dave the Dude is a big bum, although Dave is not so big, at that, and that she loves Waldo Winchester.

Dave walks over and starts to give Waldo Winchester the leather, which is considered customary in such cases, but he seems to change his mind, and instead of booting Waldo

around, Dave turns and walks out of the joint looking very black and mad, and the next anybody hears of him he is over in the Chicken Club doing plenty of drinking.

This is regarded as a very bad sign indeed, because while everybody goes to the Chicken Club now and then to give Tony Berzola, the owner, a friendly play, very few people care to do any drinking there, because Tony's liquor is not meant for anybody to drink except the customers.

Well, Miss Billy Perry gets Waldo Winchester on his pegs again, and wipes his chin off with her handkerchief, and by and by he is all okay except for a big lump on his chin. And all the time she is telling Waldo Winchester what a big bum Dave the Dude is, although afterwards Miss Missouri Martin gets hold of Miss Billy Perry and puts the blast on her plenty for chasing a two-handed spender such as Dave the Dude out of the joint.

'You are nothing but a little sap,' Miss Missouri Martin tells Miss Billy Perry. 'You cannot get the right time off this newspaper guy, while everybody knows Dave the Dude is a very fast man with a dollar.'

'But I love Mr. Winchester,' says Miss Billy Perry. 'He is so romantic. He is not a bootlegger and a gunman like Dave the Dude. He puts lovely pieces in the paper about me, and he is a gentleman at all times.'

Now of course Miss Missouri Martin is not in a position to argue about gentlemen, because she meets very few in the Sixteen Hundred Club and anyway, she does not wish to make Waldo Winchester mad as he is apt to turn around and put pieces in his paper that will be a knock to the joint, so she lets the matter drop.

Miss Billy Perry and Waldo Winchester go on holding hands between her numbers, and maybe kissing each other now and then, as young people are liable to do, and Dave the Dude plays the chill for the Sixteen Hundred Club and everything seems to be all right. Naturally we are all very glad there

is no more trouble over the proposition, because the best Dave can get is the worst of it in a jam with a newspaper guy.

Personally, I figure Dave will soon find himself another doll and forget all about Miss Billy Perry, because now that I take another peek at her, I can see where she is just about the same as any other tap-dancer, except that she is red-headed. Tap-dancers are generally blackheads, but I do not know why.

Moosh, the doorman at the Sixteen Hundred Club, tells me Miss Missouri Martin keeps plugging for Dave the Dude with Miss Billy Perry in a quiet way, because he says he hears Miss Missouri Martin make the following crack one night to her: 'Well, I do not see any Simple Simon on your lean and linger.'

This is Miss Missouri Martin's way of saying she sees no diamond on Miss Billy Perry's finger, for Miss Missouri Martin is an old experienced doll, who figures if a guy loves a doll he will prove it with diamonds. Miss Missouri Martin has many diamonds herself, though how any guy can ever get himself heated up enough about Miss Missouri Martin to give her diamonds is more than I can see.

I am not a guy who goes around much, so I do not see Dave the Dude for a couple of weeks, but late one Sunday afternoon little Johnny McGowan, who is one of Dave's men, comes and says to me like this: 'What do you think? Dave grabs the scribe a little while ago and is taking him out for an airing!'

Well, Johnny is so excited it is some time before I can get him cooled out enough to explain. It seems that Dave the Dude gets his biggest car out of the garage and sends his driver, Wop Joe, over to the Item office where Waldo Winchester works, with a message that Miss Billy Perry wishes to see Waldo right away at Miss Missouri Martin's apartment on Fifty-ninth Street.

Of course this message is nothing but the phonus bolonus, but Waldo drops in for it and gets in the car. Then Wop Joe drives him up to Miss Missouri Martin's apartment, and who gets in the car there but Dave the Dude. And away they go.

Now this is very bad news indeed, because when Dave the Dude takes a guy out for an airing the guy very often does not come back. What happens to him I never ask, because the best a guy can get by asking questions in this man's town is a bust in the nose.

But I am much worried over this proposition, because I like Dave the Dude, and I know that taking a newspaper guy like Waldo Winchester out for an airing is apt to cause talk, especially if he does not come back. The other guys that Dave the Dude takes out for airings do not mean much in particular, but here is a guy who may produce trouble, even if he is a sucker, on account of being connected with a newspaper.

I know enough about newspapers to know that by and by the editor or somebody will be around wishing to know where Waldo Winchester's pieces about Broadway are, and if there are no pieces from Waldo Winchester, the editor will wish to know why. Finally it will get around to where other people will wish to know, and after a while many people will be running around saying: 'Where is Waldo Winchester?'

And if enough people in this town get to running around saying where is So-and-so, it becomes a great mystery and the newspapers hop on the cops and the cops hop on everybody, and by and by there is so much heat in town that it is no place for a guy to be.

But what is to be done about this situation I do not know. Personally, it strikes me as very bad indeed, and while Johnny goes away to do a little telephoning, I am trying to think up some place to go where people will see me, and remember afterwards that I am there in case it is necessary for them to remember.

Finally Johnny comes back, very excited, and says: 'Hey, the Dude is up at the Woodcock Inn on the Pelham Parkway, and he is sending out the word for one and all to come at once. Good Time Charley Bernstein just gets the wire and tells me. Something is doing. The rest of the mob are on their way, so

let us be moving.'

But here is an invitation which does not strike me as a good thing at all. The way I look at it, Dave the Dude is no company for a guy like me at this time. The chances are he either does something to Waldo Winchester already, or is getting ready to do something to him which I wish no part of.

Personally, I have nothing against newspaper guys, not even the ones who write pieces about Broadway. If Dave the Dude wishes to do something to Waldo Winchester, all right, but what is the sense of bringing outsiders into it? But the next thing I know, I am in Johnny McGowan's roadster, and he is zipping along very fast indeed, paying practically no attention to traffic lights or anything else.

As we go busting out the Concourse, I get to thinking the situation over, and I figure that Dave the Dude probably keeps thinking about Miss Billy Perry, and drinking liquor such as they sell in the Chicken Club, until finally he blows his topper. The way I look at it, only a guy who is off his nut will think of taking a newspaper guy out for an airing over a doll, when dolls are a dime a dozen in this man's town.

Still, I remember reading in the papers about a lot of different guys who are considered very sensible until they get tangled up with a doll, and maybe loving her, and the first thing anybody knows they hop out of windows, or shoot themselves, or somebody else, and I can see where even a guy like Dave the Dude may go daffy over a doll.

I can see that little Johnny McGowan is worried, too, but he does not say much, and we pull up in front of the Woodcock Inn in no time whatever, to find a lot of other cars there ahead of us, some of which I recognize as belonging to different parties.

The Woodcock Inn is what is called a road house, and is run by Big Nig Skolsky, a very nice man indeed, and a friend of everybody's. It stands back a piece off the Pelham Parkway and is a very pleasant place to go to, what with Nig having a good

band and a floor show with a lot of fair-looking dolls, and everything else a man can wish for a good time. It gets a nice play from nice people, although Nig's liquor is nothing extra.

Personally, I never go there much, because I do not care for road houses, but it is a great spot for Dave the Dude when he is pitching parties, or even when he is only drinking single-handed. There is a lot of racket in the joint as we drive up, and who comes out to meet us but Dave the Dude himself with a big hello. His face is very red, and he seems heated up no little, but he does not look like a guy who is meaning any harm to anybody, especially a newspaper guy.

'Come in, guys!' Dave the Dude yells. 'Come right in!'

So we go in, and the place is full of people sitting at tables, or out on the floor dancing, and I see Miss Missouri Martin with all her diamonds hanging from her in different places, and Good Time Charley Bernstein, and Feet Samuels, and Tony Bertazzola, and Skeets Boliver, and Nick the Greek, and Rochester Red, and a lot of other guys and dolls from around and about.

In fact, it looks as if everybody from all the joints on Broadway are present, including Miss Billy Perry, who is all dressed up in white and is lugging a big bundle of orchids and so forth, and who is giggling and smiling and shaking hands and going on generally. And finally I see Waldo Winchester, the scribe, sitting at a ringside table all by himself, but there is nothing wrong with him as far as I can see. I mean, he seems to be all in one piece so far.

'Dave,' I say to Dave the Dude, very quiet, 'what is coming off here? You know a guy cannot be too careful what he does around this town, and I will hate to see you tangled up in anything right now.'

'Why,' Dave says, 'what are you talking about? Nothing is coming off here but a wedding, and it is going to be the best wedding anybody on Broadway ever sees. We are waiting for the preacher now.'

‘You mean somebody is going to be married?’ I ask, being now somewhat confused.

‘Certainly,’ Dave the Dude says. ‘What do you think? What is the idea of a wedding, anyway?’

‘Who is going to be married?’ I ask.

‘Nobody but Billy and the scribe,’ Dave says. ‘This is the greatest thing I ever do in my life. I run into Billy the other night and she is crying her eyes out because she loves this scribe and wishes to marry him, but it seems the scribe has nothing he can use for money. So I tell Billy to leave it to me, because you know I love her myself so much I wish to see her happy at all times, even if she has to marry to be that way.

‘So I frame this wedding party, and after they are married I am going to stake them to a few G’s so they can get a good running start,’ Dave says. ‘But I do not tell the scribe and I do not let Billy tell him as I wish it to be a big surprise to him. I kidnap him this afternoon and bring him out here and he is scared half to death thinking I am going to scrag him.

‘In fact,’ Dave says, ‘I never see a guy so scared. He is still so scared nothing seems to cheer him up. Go over and tell him to shake himself together, because nothing but happiness for him is coming off here.’

Well, I wish to say I am greatly relieved to think that Dave intends doing nothing worse to Waldo Winchester than getting him married up, so I go over to where Waldo is sitting. He certainly looks somewhat alarmed. He is all in a huddle with himself, and he has what you call a vacant stare in his eyes. I can see that he is indeed frightened, so I give him a jolly slap on the back and I say: ‘Congratulations, pal! Cheer up, the worst is yet to come!’

‘You bet it is,’ Waldo Winchester says, his voice so solemn I am greatly surprised.

‘You are a fine-looking bridegroom,’ I say. ‘You look as if you are at a funeral instead of a wedding. Why do you not laugh ha-ha, and maybe take a dram or two and go to cutting

up some?’

‘Mister,’ says Waldo Winchester, ‘my wife is not going to care for me getting married to Miss Billy Perry.’

‘Your wife?’ I say, much astonished. ‘What is this you are speaking of? How can you have any wife except Miss Billy Perry? This is great foolishness.’

‘I know,’ Waldo says, very sad. ‘I know. But I got a wife just the same, and she is going to be very nervous when she hears about this. My wife is very strict with me. My wife does not allow me to go around marrying people. My wife is Lola Sapola, of the Rolling Sapolas, the acrobats, and I am married to her for five years. She is the strong lady who juggles the other four people in the act. My wife just gets back from a year’s tour of the Interstate time, and she is at the Marx Hotel right this minute. I am upset by this proposition.’

‘Does Miss Billy Perry know about this wife?’ I ask.

‘No,’ he says. ‘No. She thinks I am single-o.’

‘But why do you not tell Dave the Dude you are already married when he brings you out here to marry you off to Miss Billy Perry?’ I ask. ‘It seems to me a newspaper guy must know it is against the law for a guy to marry several different dolls unless he is a Turk, or some such.’

‘Well,’ Waldo says, ‘if I tell Dave the Dude I am married after taking his doll away from him, I am quite sure Dave will be very much excited, and maybe do something harmful to my health.’

Now there is much in what the guy says, to be sure. I am inclined to think, myself, that Dave will be somewhat disturbed when he learns of this situation, especially when Miss Billy Perry starts in being unhappy about it. But what is to be done I do not know, except maybe to let the wedding go on, and then when Waldo is out of reach of Dave, to put in a claim that he is insane, and that the marriage does not count. It is a sure thing I do not wish to be around when Dave the Dude hears Waldo is already married.

I am thinking that maybe I better take it on the lam out of here, when there is a great row at the door and I hear Dave the Dude yelling that the preacher arrives. He is a very nice-looking preacher, at that, though he seems somewhat surprised by the goings-on, especially when Miss Missouri Martin steps up and takes charge of him. Miss Missouri Martin tells him she is fond of preachers, and is quite used to them, because she is twice married by preachers, and twice by justices of the peace, and once by a ship's captain at sea.

By this time one and all present, except maybe myself and Waldo Winchester, and the preacher and maybe Miss Billy Perry, are somewhat corned. Waldo is still sitting at his table looking very sad and saying 'Yes' and 'No' to Miss Billy Perry whenever she skips past him, for Miss Billy Perry is too much pleased up with happiness to stay long in one spot.

Dave the Dude is more corned than anybody else, because he has two or three days' running start on everybody. And when Dave the Dude is corned I wish to say that he is a very unreliable guy as to temper, and he is apt to explode right in your face any minute. But he seems to be getting a great bang out of the doings.

Well, by and by Nig Skolsky has the dance floor cleared, and then he moves out on the floor a sort of arch of very beautiful flowers. The idea seems to be that Miss Billy Perry and Waldo Winchester are to be married under this arch. I can see that Dave the Dude must put in several days planning this whole proposition, and it must cost him plenty of the old do-re-mi, especially as I see him showing Miss Missouri Martin a diamond ring as big as a cough drop.

'It is for the bride,' Dave the Dude says. 'The poor loogan she is marrying will never have enough dough to buy her such a rock, and she always wishes a big one. I get it off a guy who brings it in from Los Angeles. I am going to give the bride away myself in person, so how do I act, Mizzoo? I want Billy to have everything according to the book.'

Well, while Miss Missouri Martin is trying to remember back to one of her weddings to tell him, I take another peek at Waldo Winchester to see how he is making out. I once see two guys go to the old warm squativoo up in Sing Sing, and I wish to say both are laughing heartily compared to Waldo Winchester at this moment.

Miss Billy Perry is sitting with him and the orchestra leader is calling his men dirty names because none of them can think of how 'Oh, Promise Me' goes, when Dave the Dude yells: 'Well, we are all set! Let the happy couple step forward!'

Miss Billy Perry bounces up and grabs Waldo Winchester by the arm and pulls him up out of his chair. After a peek at his face I am willing to lay 6 to 5 he does not make the arch. But he finally gets there with everybody laughing and clapping their hands, and the preacher comes forward, and Dave the Dude looks happier than I ever see him look before in his life as they all get together under the arch of flowers.

Well, all of a sudden there is a terrible racket at the front door of the Woodcock Inn, with some doll doing a lot of hollering in a deep voice that sounds like a man's, and naturally everybody turns and looks that way. The doorman, a guy by the name of Slugsy Sachs, who is a very hard man indeed, seems to be trying to keep somebody out, but pretty soon there is a heavy bump and Slugsy Sachs falls down, and in comes a doll about four feet high and five feet wide.

In fact, I never see such a wide doll. She looks all hammered down. Her face is almost as wide as her shoulders, and makes me think of a great big full moon. She comes in bounding-like, and I can see that she is all churned up about something. As she bounces in, I hear a gurgle, and I look around to see Waldo Winchester slumping down to the floor, almost dragging Miss Billy Perry with him.

Well, the wide doll walks right up to the bunch under the arch and says in a large bass voice: 'Which one is Dave the Dude?'

'I am Dave the Dude,' says Dave the Dude, stepping up. 'What do you mean by busting in here like a walrus and gumming up our wedding?'

'So you are the guy who kidnaps my ever-loving husband to marry him off to this little red-headed pancake here, are you?' the wide doll says, looking at Dave the Dude, but pointing at Miss Billy Perry.

Well now, calling Miss Billy Perry a pancake to Dave the Dude is a very serious proposition, and Dave the Dude gets very angry. He is usually rather polite to dolls, but you can see he does not care for the wide doll's manner whatever.

'Say, listen here,' Dave the Dude says, 'you better take a walk before somebody clips you. You must be drunk,' he says. 'Or daffy,' he says. 'What are you talking about, anyway?'

'You will see what I am talking about,' the wide doll yells. 'The guy on the floor there is my lawful husband. You probably frighten him to death, the poor dear. You kidnap him to marry this red-headed thing, and I am going to get you arrested as sure as my name is Lola Sapola, you simple-looking tramp!'

Naturally, everybody is greatly horrified at a doll using such language to Dave the Dude, because Dave is known to shoot guys for much less, but instead of doing something to the wide doll at once, Dave says: 'What is this talk I hear? Who is married to who? Get out of here!' Dave says, grabbing the wide doll's arm.

Well, she makes out as if she is going to slap Dave in the face with her left hand, and Dave naturally pulls his kisser out of the way. But instead of doing anything with her left, Lola Sapola suddenly drives her right fist smack-dab into Dave the Dude's stomach, which naturally comes forward as his face goes back.

I wish to say I see many a body punch delivered in my life, but I never see a prettier one than this. What is more, Lola Sapola steps in with the punch, so there is plenty on it.

Now a guy who eats and drinks like Dave the Dude does

cannot take them so good in the stomach, so Dave goes ‘oof,’ and sits down very hard on the dance floor, and as he is sitting there he is fumbling in his pants pocket for the old equalizer, so everybody around tears for cover except Lola Sapola, and Miss Billy Perry, and Waldo Winchester.

But before he can get his pistol out, Lola Sapola reaches down and grabs Dave by the collar and hoists him to his feet. She lets go her hold on him, leaving Dave standing on his pins, but teetering around somewhat, and then she drives her right hand to Dave’s stomach a second time.

The punch drops Dave again, and Lola steps up to him as if she is going to give him the foot. But she only gathers up Waldo Winchester from off the floor and slings him across her shoulder like he is a sack of oats, and starts for the door. Dave the Dude sits up on the floor again and by this time he has the old equalizer in his duke.

‘Only for me being a gentleman I will fill you full of slugs,’ he yells.

Lola Sapola never even looks back, because by this time she is petting Waldo Winchester’s head and calling him loving names and saying what a shame it is for bad characters like Dave the Dude to be abusing her precious one. It all sounds to me as if Lola Sapola thinks well of Waldo Winchester.

Well, after she gets out of sight, Dave the Dude gets up off the floor and stands there looking at Miss Billy Perry, who is out to break all crying records. The rest of us come out from under cover, including the preacher, and we are wondering how mad Dave the Dude is going to be about the wedding being ruined. But Dave the Dude seems only disappointed and sad.

‘Billy,’ he says to Miss Billy Perry, ‘I am mighty sorry you do not get your wedding. All I wish for is your happiness, but I do not believe you can ever be happy with this scribe if he also has to have his lion tamer around. As Cupid I am a total bust. This is the only nice thing I ever try to do in my whole life, and it is too bad it does not come off. Maybe if you wait until we

can drown her, or something—’

‘Dave,’ says Miss Billy Perry, dropping so many tears that she seems to finally wash herself right into Dave the Dude’s arms, ‘I will never, never be happy with such a guy as Waldo Winchester. I can see now you are the only man for me.’

‘Well, well, well,’ Dave the Dude says, cheering right up. ‘Where is the preacher? Bring on the preacher and let us have our wedding anyway.’

I see Mr. and Mrs. Dave the Dude the other day, and they seem very happy. But you never can tell about married people, so of course I am never going to let on to Dave the Dude that I am the one who telephones Lola Sapola at the Marx Hotel, because maybe I do not do Dave any too much of a favour, at that.

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Hold 'em Yale

What I am doing in New Haven on the day of a very large foot-ball game between the Harvards and the Yales is something which calls for quite a little explanation, because I am not such a guy as you will expect to find in New Haven at any time, and especially on the day of a large football game.

But there I am, and the reason I am there goes back to a Friday night when I am sitting in Mindy's restaurant on Broadway thinking of very little except how I can get hold of a few potatoes to take care of the old overhead. And while I am sitting there, who comes in but Sam the Gonoph, who is a ticket speculator by trade, and who seems to be looking all around and about.

Well, Sam the Gonoph gets to talking to me, and it turns out that he is looking for a guy by the name of Gigolo Georgie, who is called Gigolo Georgie because he is always hanging around night clubs wearing a little moustache and white spats, and dancing with old dolls. In fact, Gigolo Georgie is nothing but a gentleman bum, and I am surprised that Sam the Gonoph is looking for him.

But it seems that the reason Sam the Gonoph wishes to find Gigolo Georgie is to give him a good punch in the snoot, because it seems that Gigolo Georgie promotes Sam for several duckets to the large football game between the Harvards and the Yales to sell on commission, and never kicks back anything whatever to Sam. Naturally Sam considers Gigolo Georgie nothing but a rascal for doing such a thing to him, and Sam says he will find Gigolo Georgie and give him a going-over if it is the last act of his life.

Well, then, Sam explains to me that he has quite a few nice duckets for the large football game between the Harvards and the Yales and that he is taking a crew of guys with him to New Haven the next day to hustle these duckets, and what about me going along and helping to hustle these duckets and making a few bobs for myself, which is an invitation that sounds very pleasant to me, indeed.

Now of course it is very difficult for anybody to get nice duckets to a large football game between the Harvards and the Yales unless they are personally college guys, and Sam the Gonoph is by no means a college guy. In fact, the nearest Sam ever comes to a college is once when he is passing through the yard belonging to the Princetons, but Sam is on the fly at the time as a gendarme is after him, so he does not really see much of the college.

But every college guy is entitled to duckets to a large football game with which his college is connected, and it is really surprising how many college guys do not care to see large football games even after they get their duckets, especially if a ticket spec such as Sam the Gonoph comes along offering them a few bobs more than the duckets are worth. I suppose this is because a college guy figures he can see a large football game when he is old, while many things are taking place around and about that it is necessary for him to see while he is young enough to really enjoy them, such as the Follies.

Anyway, many college guys are always willing to listen to reason when Sam the Gonoph comes around offering to buy their duckets, and then Sam takes these duckets and sells them to customers for maybe ten times the price the duckets call for, and in this way Sam does very good for himself.

I know Sam the Gonoph for maybe twenty years, and always he is speculating in duckets of one kind and another. Sometimes it is duckets for the world's series, and sometimes for big fights, and sometimes it is duckets for nothing but

lawn-tennis games, although why anybody wishes to see such a thing as lawn tennis is always a very great mystery to Sam the Gonoph and everybody else.

But in all those years I see Sam dodging around under the feet of the crowds at these large events, or running through the special trains offering to buy or sell duckets, I never hear of Sam personally attending any of these events except maybe a baseball game, or a fight, for Sam has practically no interest in anything but a little profit on his duckets.

He is a short, chunky, black-looking guy with a big beezer, and he is always sweating even on a cold day, and he comes from down around Essex Street, on the lower East Side. Moreover, Sam the Gonoph's crew generally comes from the lower East Side, too, for as Sam goes along he makes plenty of potatoes for himself and branches out quite some, and has a lot of assistants hustling duckets around these different events.

When Sam is younger the cops consider him hard to get along with, and in fact his monicker, the Gonoph, comes from his young days down on the lower East Side, and I hear it is Yiddish for thief, but of course as Sam gets older and starts gathering plenty of potatoes, he will not think of stealing anything. At least not much, and especially if it is anything that is nailed down.

Well, anyway, I meet Sam the Gonoph and his crew at the information desk in Grand Central the next morning, and this is how I come to be in New Haven on the day of the large football game between the Harvards and the Yales.

For such a game as this, Sam has all his best hustlers, including such as Jew Louie, Nubbsy Taylor, Benny South Street and old Liverlips, and to look at these parties you will never suspect that they are top-notch ducket hustlers. The best you will figure them is a lot of guys who are not to be met up with in a dark alley, but then ducket-hustling is a rough-and-tumble dodge and it will scarcely be good policy to hire female impersonators.

Now while we are hustling these duckets out around the main gates of the Yale Bowl I notice a very beautiful little doll of maybe sixteen or seventeen standing around watching the crowd, and I can see she is waiting for somebody, as many dolls often do at football games. But I can also see that this little doll is very much worried as the crowd keeps going in, and it is getting on toward game time. In fact, by and by I can see this little doll has tears in her eyes and if there is anything I hate to see it is tears in a doll's eyes.

So finally I go over to her, and I say as follows: 'What is eating you, little Miss?'

'Oh,' she says, 'I am waiting for Elliot. He is to come up from New York and meet me here to take me to the game, but he is not here yet, and I am afraid something happens to him. Furthermore,' she says, the tears in her eyes getting very large, indeed, 'I am afraid I will miss the game because he has my ticket.'

'Why,' I say, 'this is a very simple proposition. I will sell you a choice ducket for only a sawbuck, which is ten dollars in your language, and you are getting such a bargain only because the game is about to begin, and the market is going down.'

'But,' she says, 'I do not have ten dollars. In fact, I have only fifty cents left in my purse, and this is worrying me very much, for what will I do if Elliot does not meet me? You see,' she says, 'I come from Miss Peevy's school at Worcester, and I only have enough money to pay my railroad fare here, and of course I cannot ask Miss Peevy for any money as I do not wish her to know I am going away.'

Well, naturally all this is commencing to sound to me like a hardluck story such as any doll is apt to tell, so I go on about my business because I figure she will next be trying to put the lug on me for a ducket, or maybe for her railroad fare back to Worcester, although generally dolls with hard-luck stories live in San Francisco.

She keeps on standing there, and I notice she is now

crying more than somewhat, and I get to thinking to myself that she is about as cute a little doll as I ever see, although too young for anybody to be bothering much about. Furthermore, I get to thinking that maybe she is on the level, at that, with her story.

Well, by this time the crowd is nearly all in the Bowl, and only a few parties such as coppers and hustlers of one kind and another are left standing outside, and there is much cheering going on inside, when Sam the Gonoph comes up looking very much disgusted, and speaks as follows:

‘What do you think?’ Sam says. ‘I am left with seven duckets on my hands, and these guys around here will not pay as much as face value for them, and they stand me better than three bucks over that. Well,’ Sam says, ‘I am certainly not going to let them go for less than they call for if I have to eat them. What do you guys say we use these duckets ourselves and go in and see the game? Personally,’ Sam says, ‘I often wish to see one of these large football games just to find out what makes suckers willing to pay so much for duckets.’

Well, this seems to strike one and all, including myself, as a great idea, because none of the rest of us ever see a large football game either, so we start for the gate, and as we pass the little doll who is still crying, I say to Sam the Gonoph like this:

‘Listen, Sam,’ I say, ‘you have seven duckets, and we are only six, and here is a little doll who is stood up by her guy, and has no ducket, and no potatoes to buy one with, so what about taking her with us?’

Well, this is all right with Sam the Gonoph, and none of the others object, so I step up to the little doll and invite her to go with us, and right away she stops crying and begins smiling, and saying we are very kind indeed. She gives Sam the Gonoph an extra big smile, and right away Sam is saying she is very cute, indeed, and then she gives old Liverlips an even bigger smile, and what is more she takes old Liverlips by the

arm and walks with him, and old Liverlips is not only very much astonished, but very much pleased. In fact, old Liverlips begins stepping out very spry, and Liverlips is not such a guy as cares to have any part of dolls, young or old.

But while walking with old Liverlips, the little doll talks very friendly to Jew Louie and to Nubbsy Taylor and Benny South Street, and even to me, and by and by you will think to see us that we are all her uncles, although of course if this little doll really knows who she is with, the chances are she will start chucking faints one after the other.

Anybody can see that she has very little experience in this wicked old world, and in fact is somewhat rattleheaded, because she gabs away very freely about her personal business. In fact, before we are in the Bowl she lets it out that she runs away from Miss Peevy's school to elope with this Elliot, and she says the idea is they are to be married in Hartford after the game. In fact, she says Elliot wishes to go to Hartford and be married before the game.

'But,' she says, 'my brother John is playing substitute with the Yales to-day, and I cannot think of getting married to anybody before I see him play, although I am much in love with Elliot. He is a wonderful dancer,' she says, 'and very romantic. I meet him in Atlantic City last summer. Now we are eloping,' she says, 'because my father does not care for Elliot whatever. In fact, my father hates Elliot, although he only sees him once, and it is because he hates Elliot so that my father sends me to Miss Peevy's school in Worcester. She is an old pill. Do you not think my father is unreasonable?' she says.

Well, of course none of us have any ideas on such propositions as this, although old Liverlips tells the little doll he is with her right or wrong, and pretty soon we are inside the Bowl and sitting in seats as good as any in the joint. It seems we are on the Harvards' side of the field, although of course I will never know this if the little doll does not mention it.

She seems to know everything about this football business,

and as soon as we sit down she tries to point out her brother playing substitute for the Yales, saying he is the fifth guy from the end among a bunch of guys sitting on a bench on the other side of the field all wrapped in blankets. But we cannot make much of him from where we sit, and anyway it does not look to me as if he has much of a job.

It seems we are right in the middle of all the Harvards and they are making an awful racket, what with yelling, and singing, and one thing and another, because it seems the game is going on when we get in, and that the Harvards are shoving the Yales around more than somewhat. So our little doll lets everybody know she is in favour of the Yales by yelling, 'Hold 'em, Yale!'

Personally, I cannot tell which are the Harvards and which are the Yales at first, and Sam the Gonoph and the others are as dumb as I am, but she explains the Harvards are wearing the red shirts and the Yales the blue shirts, and by and by we are yelling for the Yales to hold 'em, too, although of course it is only on account of our little doll wishing the Yales to hold 'em, and not because any of us care one way or the other.

Well, it seems that the idea of a lot of guys and a little doll getting right among them and yelling for the Yales to hold 'em is very repulsive to the Harvards around us, although any of them must admit it is very good advice to the Yales, at that, and some of them start making cracks of one kind and another, especially at our little doll. The chances are they are very jealous because she is outyelling them, because I will say one thing for our little doll, she can yell about as loud as anybody I ever hear, male or female.

A couple of Harvards sitting in front of old Liverlips are imitating our little doll's voice, and making guys around them laugh very heartily, but all of a sudden these parties leave their seats and go away in great haste, their faces very pale, indeed, and I figure maybe they are both taken sick at the same moment, but afterwards I learn that Liverlips takes a big shiv

out of his pocket and opens it and tells them very confidentially that he is going to carve their ears off.

Naturally, I do not blame the Harvards for going away in great haste, for Liverlips is such a looking guy as you will figure to take great delight in carving off ears. Furthermore, Nubbsy Taylor and Benny South Street and Jew Louie and even Sam the Gonoph commence exchanging such glances with other Harvards around us who are making cracks at our little doll that presently there is almost a dead silence in our neighbourhood, except for our little doll yelling, 'Hold 'em, Yale!' You see by this time we are all very fond of our little doll because she is so cute looking and has so much zing in her, and we do not wish anybody making cracks at her or at us either, and especially at us.

In fact, we are so fond of her that when she happens to mention that she is a little chilly, Jew Louie and Nubbsy Taylor slip around among the Harvards and come back with four steamer rugs, six mufflers, two pairs of gloves, and a thermos bottle full of hot coffee for her, and Jew Louie says if she wishes a mink coat to just say the word. But she already has a mink coat. Furthermore, Jew Louie brings her a big bunch of red flowers that he finds on a doll with one of the Harvards, and he is much disappointed when she says it is the wrong colour for her.

Well, finally the game is over, and I do not remember much about it, although afterwards I hear that our little doll's brother John plays substitute for the Yales very good. But it seems that the Harvards win, and our little doll is very sad indeed about this, and is sitting there looking out over the field, which is now covered with guys dancing around as if they all suddenly go daffy, and it seems they are all Harvards, because there is really no reason for the Yales to do any dancing.

All of a sudden our little doll looks toward one end of the field, and says as follows:

‘Oh, they are going to take our goal posts!’

Sure enough, a lot of Harvards are gathering around the posts at this end of the field, and are pulling and hauling at the posts, which seem to be very stout posts, indeed. Personally, I will not give you eight cents for these posts, but afterwards one of the Yales tells me that when a football team wins a game it is considered the proper caper for this team’s boosters to grab the other guys’ goal posts. But he is not able to tell me what good the posts are after they get them, and this is one thing that will always be a mystery to me.

Anyway, while we are watching the goings-on around the goal posts, our little doll says come on and jumps up and runs down an aisle and out on to the field, and into the crowd around the goal posts, so naturally we follow her. Somehow she manages to wiggle through the crowd of Harvards around the posts, and the next thing anybody knows she shins up one of the posts faster than you can say scat, and pretty soon is roosting out on the cross-bar between the posts like a chipmunk.

Afterwards she explains that her idea is the Harvards will not be ungentlemanly enough to pull down the goal posts with a lady roosting on them, but it seems these Harvards are no gentlemen, and keep on pulling, and the posts commence to teeter, and our little doll is teetering with them, although of course she is in no danger if she falls because she is sure to fall on the Harvards’ noggins, and the way I look at it, the noggin of anybody who will be found giving any time to pulling down goal posts is apt to be soft enough to break a very long fall.

Now Sam the Gonoph and old Liverlips and Nubbsy Taylor and Benny South Street and Jew Louie and I reach the crowd around the goal posts at about the same time, and our little doll sees us from her roost and yells to us as follows:

‘Do not let them take our posts!’

Well, about this time one of the Harvards who seems to be about nine feet high reaches over six other guys and hits me

on the chin and knocks me so far that when I pick myself up I am pretty well out of the way of everybody and have a chance to see what is going on.

Afterwards somebody tells me that the guy probably thinks I am one of the Yales coming to the rescue of the goal posts, but I wish to say I will always have a very low opinion of college guys, because I remember two other guys punch me as I am going through the air, unable to defend myself.

Now Sam the Gonoph and Nubbsy Taylor and Jew Louie and Benny South Street and old Liverlips somehow manage to ease their way through the crowd until they are under the goal posts, and our little doll is much pleased to see them, because the Harvards are now making the posts teeter more than somewhat with their pulling, and it looks as if the posts will go any minute.

Of course Sam the Gonoph does not wish any trouble with these parties, and he tries to speak nicely to the guys who are pulling at the posts, saying as follows:

‘Listen,’ Sam says, ‘the little doll up there does not wish you to take these posts.’

Well, maybe they do not hear Sam’s words in the confusion, or if they do hear them they do not wish to pay any attention to them, for one of the Harvards mashes Sam’s derby hat down over his eyes, and another smacks old Liverlips on the left ear, while Jew Louie and Nubbsy Taylor and Benny South Street are shoved around quite some.

‘All right,’ Sam the Gonoph says, as soon as he can pull his hat off his eyes, ‘all right, gentlemen, if you wish to play this way. Now, boys, let them have it!’

So Sam the Gonoph and Nubbsy Taylor and Jew Louie and Benny South Street and old Liverlips begin letting them have it, and what they let them have it with is not only their dukes, but with the good old difference in their dukes, because these guys are by no means suckers when it comes to a battle, and they all carry something in their pockets to put in their dukes

in case of a fight, such as a dollar's worth of nickels rolled up tight.

Furthermore, they are using the old leather, kicking guys in the stomach when they are not able to hit them on the chin, and Liverlips is also using his noodle to good advantage, grabbing guys by their coat lapels and yanking them into him so he can butt them between the eyes with his noggin, and I wish to say that old Liverlips' noggin is a very dangerous weapon at all times.

Well, the ground around them is soon covered with Harvards, and it seems that some Yales are also mixed up with them, being Yales who think Sam the Gonoph and his guys are other Yales defending the goal posts, and wishing to help out. But of course Sam the Gonoph and his guys cannot tell the Yales from the Harvards, and do not have time to ask which is which, so they are just letting everybody have it who comes along. And while all this is going on our little doll is sitting up on the crossbar and yelling plenty of encouragement to Sam and his guys.

Now it turns out that these Harvards are by no means soft touches in a scrabble such as this, and as fast as they are flattened they get up and keep belting away, and while the old experience is running for Sam the Gonoph and Jew Louie and Nubbsy Taylor and Benny South Street and old Liverlips early in the fight, the Harvards have youth in their favour.

Pretty soon the Harvards are knocking down Sam the Gonoph, then they start knocking down Nubbsy Taylor, and by and by they are knocking down Benny South Street and Jew Louie and Liverlips, and it is so much fun that the Harvards forget all about the goal posts. Of course as fast as Sam the Gonoph and his guys are knocked down they also get up, but the Harvards are too many for them, and they are getting an awful shellacking when the nine-foot guy who flattens me, and who is knocking down Sam the Gonoph so often he is becoming a great nuisance to Sam, sings out:

'Listen,' he says, 'these are game guys, even if they do go to Yale. Let us cease knocking them down,' he says, 'and give them a cheer.'

So the Harvards knock down Sam the Gonoph and Nubbsy Taylor and Jew Louie and Benny South Street and old Liverlips just once more and then all the Harvards put their heads together and say rah-rah-rah, very loud, and go away, leaving the goal posts still standing, with our little doll still roosting on the cross-bar, although afterwards I hear some Harvards who are not in the fight get the posts at the other end of the field and sneak away with them. But I always claim these posts do not count.

Well, sitting there on the ground because he is too tired to get up from the last knockdown, and holding one hand to his right eye, which is closed tight, Sam the Gonoph is by no means a well guy, and all around and about him is much suffering among his crew. But our little doll is hopping up and down chattering like a jaybird and running between old Liverlips, who is stretched out against one goal post, and Nubbsy Taylor, who is leaning up against the other, and she is trying to mop the blood off their kissers with a handkerchief the size of a postage stamp.

Benny South Street is laying across Jew Louie and both are still snoring from the last knockdown, and the Bowl is now pretty much deserted except for the newspaper scribes away up in the press box, who do not seem to realize that the Battle of the Century just comes off in front of them. It is coming on dark, when all of a sudden a guy pops up out of the dusk wearing white spats and an overcoat with a fur collar, and he rushes up to our little doll.

'Clarice,' he says, 'I am looking for you high and low. My train is stalled for hours behind a wreck the other side of Bridgeport, and I get here just after the game is over. But,' he says, 'I figure you will be waiting somewhere for me. Let us hurry on to Hartford, darling,' he says.

Well, when he hears this voice, Sam the Gonoph opens his good eye wide and takes a peek at the guy. Then all of a sudden Sam jumps up and wobbles over to the guy and hits him a smack between the eyes. Sam is wobbling because his legs are not so good from the shellacking he takes off the Harvards, and furthermore he is away off in his punching as the guy only goes to his knees and comes right up standing again as our little doll lets out a screech and speaks as follows:

‘Oo-oo!’ she says. ‘Do not hit Elliot! He is not after our goal posts!’

‘Elliot?’ Sam the Gonoph says. ‘This is no Elliot. This is nobody but Gigolo Georgie. I can tell him by his white spats,’ Sam says, ‘and I am now going to get even for the pasting I take from the Harvards.’

Then he nails the guy again and this time he seems to have a little more on his punch, for the guy goes down and Sam the Gonoph gives him the leather very good, although our little doll is still screeching, and begging Sam not to hurt Elliot. But of course the rest of us know it is not Elliot, no matter what he may tell her, but only Gigolo Georgie.

Well, the rest of us figure we may as well take a little something out of Georgie’s hide, too, but as we start for him he gives a quick wiggle and hops to his feet and tears across the field, and the last we see of him is his white spats flying through one of the portals.

Now a couple of other guys come up out of the dusk, and one of them is a tall, fine-looking guy with a white moustache and anybody can see that he is somebody, and what happens but our little doll runs right into his arms and kisses him on the white moustache and calls him daddy and starts to cry more than somewhat, so I can see we lose our little doll then and there. And now the guy with the white moustache walks up to Sam the Gonoph and sticks out his duke and says as follows:

‘Sir,’ he says, ‘permit me the honour of shaking the hand

which does me the very signal service of chastising the scoundrel who just escapes from the field. And,' he says, 'permit me to introduce myself to you. I am J. Hildreth Van Cleve, president of the Van Cleve Trust. I am notified early today by Miss Peevy of my daughter's sudden departure from school, and we learn she purchases a ticket for New Haven. I at once suspect this fellow has something to do with it. Fortunately,' he says, 'I have these private detectives here keeping tab on him for some time, knowing my child's schoolgirl infatuation for him, so we easily trail him here. We are on the train with him, and arrive in time for your last little scene with him. Sir,' he says, 'again I thank you.'

'I know who you are, Mr. Van Cleve,' Sam the Gonoph says. 'You are the Van Cleve who is down to his last forty million. But,' he says, 'do not thank me for putting the slug on Gigolo Georgie. He is a bum in spades, and I am only sorry he fools your nice little kid even for a minute, although,' Sam says, 'I figure she must be dumber than she looks to be fooled by such a guy as Gigolo Georgie.'

'I hate him,' the little doll says. 'I hate him because he is a coward. He does not stand up and fight when he is hit like you and Liverlips and the others. I never wish to see him again.'

'Do not worry,' Sam the Gonoph says. 'I will be too close to Gigolo Georgie as soon as I recover from my wounds for him to stay in this part of the country.'

Well, I do not see Sam the Gonoph or Nubbsy Taylor or Benny South Street or Jew Louie or Liverlips for nearly a year after this, and then it comes on fall again and one day I get to thinking that here it is Friday and the next day the Harvards are playing the Yales a large football game in Boston.

I figure it is a great chance for me to join up with Sam the Gonoph again to hustle duckets for him for this game, and I know Sam will be leaving along about midnight with his crew. So I go over to the Grand Central station at such a time, and sure enough he comes along by and by, busting through the

crowd in the station with Nubbsy Taylor and Benny South Street and Jew Louie and old Liverlips at his heels, and they seem very much excited.

‘Well, Sam,’ I say, as I hurry along with them, ‘here I am ready to hustle duckets for you again, and I hope and trust we do a nice business.’

‘Duckets!’ Sam the Gonoph says. ‘We are not hustling duckets for this game, although you can go with us, and welcome. We are going to Boston,’ he says, ‘to root for the Yales to kick hell out of the Harvards and we are going as the personal guests of Miss Clarice Van Cleve and her old man.’

‘Hold ’em, Yale!’ old Liverlips says, as he pushes me to one side and the whole bunch goes trotting through the gate to catch their train, and I then notice they are all wearing blue feathers in their hats with a little white Y on these feathers such as college guys always wear at football games, and that moreover Sam the Gonoph is carrying a Yale pennant.

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The Brain Goes Home

One night The Brain is walking me up and down Broadway in front of Mindy's Restaurant, and speaking of this and that, when along comes a red-headed raggedy doll selling apples at five cents per copy, and The Brain, being very fond of apples, grabs one out of her basket and hands her a five-dollar bill.

The red-headed raggedy doll, who is maybe thirty-odd and is nothing but a crow as far as looks are concerned, squints at the finnik, and says to The Brain like this:

'I do not have change for so much money,' she says, 'but I will go and get it in a minute.'

'You keep the change,' The Brain says, biting a big hunk out of the apple and taking my arm to start me walking again.

Well, the raggedy doll looks at The Brain again, and it seems to me that all of a sudden there are large tears in her eyes as she says:

'Oh, thank you, sir! Thank you, thank you, and God bless you, sir!'

And then she goes on up the street in a hurry, with her hands over her eyes and her shoulders shaking, and The Brain turns around very much astonished, and watches her until she is out of sight.

'Why, my goodness!' The Brain says. 'I give Doris Clare ten G's last night, and she does not make half as much fuss over it as this doll does over a pound note.'

'Well,' I say 'maybe the apple doll needs a pound note more than Doris needs ten G's.'

'Maybe so,' The Brain says. 'And of course, Doris gives me

much more in return than just an apple and a God bless me. Doris gives me her love. I guess,' The Brain says, 'that love costs me about as much dough as any guy that ever lives.'

'I guess it does,' I say, and the chances are we both guess right, because off-hand I figure that if The Brain gets out on three hundred G's per year for love, he is running his love business very economically indeed, because it is well known to one and all that The Brain has three different dolls, besides an ever-loving wife.

In fact, The Brain is sometimes spoken of by many citizens as the 'Love King,' but only behind his back, because The Brain likes to think his love affairs are a great secret to all but maybe a few, although the only guy I ever see in this town who does not know all about them is a guy who is deaf, dumb, and blind.

I once read a story about a guy by the name of King Solomon who lives a long time ago and who has a thousand dolls all at once, which is going in for dolls on a very large scale indeed, but I guarantee that all of King Solomon's dolls put together are not as expensive as anyone of The Brain's dolls. The overhead on Doris Clare alone will drive an ordinary guy daffy, and Doris is practically frugal compared to Cynthia Harris and Bobby Baker.

Then there is Charlotte, who is The Brain's ever-loving wife and who has a society bug and needs plenty of coconuts at all times to keep her a going concern. I once hear The Brain tell Bobby Baker that his ever-loving wife is a bit of an invalid, but as a matter of fact there is never anything the matter with Charlotte that a few bobs will not cure, although of course this goes for nearly every doll in this world who is an invalid.

When a guy is knocking around Broadway as long as The Brain, he is bound to accumulate dolls here and there, but most guys accumulate one at a time, and when this one runs out on him, as Broadway dolls will do, he accumulates another, and so on, and so on, until he is too old to care about such matters as dolls, which is when he is maybe a hundred

and four years old, although I hear of several guys who beat even this record.

But when The Brain accumulates a doll he seems to keep her accumulated, and none of them ever run out on him, and while this will be a very great nuisance to the average guy, it pleases The Brain no little because it makes him think he has a very great power over dolls.

‘They are not to blame if they fall in love with me,’ The Brain says to me one night. ‘I will not cause one of them any sorrow for all the world.’

Well, of course, it is most astonishing to me to hear a guy as smart as The Brain using such language, but I figure he may really believe it, because The Brain thinks very good of himself at all times. However, some guys claim that the real reason The Brain keeps all his dolls is because he is too selfish to give them away, although personally I will not take any of them if The Brain throws in a cash bonus, except maybe Bobby Baker.

Anyway, The Brain keeps his dolls accumulated, and furthermore he spends plenty of dough on them, what with buying them automobiles and furs and diamonds and swell places to live in—especially swell places to live in. One time I tell The Brain he will save himself plenty if he hires a house and bunches his dolls together in one big happy family, instead of having them scattered all over town, but The Brain says this idea is no good.

‘In the first place,’ he says, ‘they do not know about each other, except Doris and Cynthia and Bobby know about Charlotte, although she does not know about them. They each think they are the only one with me. So if I corral them all together they will be jealous of each other over my love. Anyway,’ The Brain says, ‘such an arrangement will be very immoral and against the law. No,’ he says, ‘it is better to have them in different spots, because think of the many homes it gives me to go to in case I wish to go home. In fact,’ The Brain says, ‘I guess I have more homes to go to than any other guy on

Broadway.'

Well, this may be true, but what The Brain wants with a lot of different homes is a very great mystery on Broadway, because he seldom goes home, anyway, his idea in not going home being that something may happen in this town while he is at home that he is not in on. The Brain seldom goes anywhere in particular. He never goes out in public with anyone of his dolls, except maybe once or twice a year with Charlotte, his ever-loving wife, and finally he even stops going with her because Doris Clare says it does not look good to Doris's personal friends.

The Brain marries Charlotte long before he becomes the biggest guy in gambling operations in the East, and a millionaire two or three times over, but he is never much of a hand to sit around home and chew the fat with his ever-loving wife, as husbands often do. Furthermore, when he is poor he has to live in a neighbourhood which is too far away for it to be convenient for him to go home, so finally he gets out of the habit of going there.

But Charlotte is not such a doll as cares to spend more than one or two years looking at the pictures on the wall, because it seems the pictures on the wall are nothing but pictures of cows in the meadows and houses covered with snow, so she does not go home any more than necessary, either, and has her own friends and is very happy indeed, especially after The Brain gets so he can send in right along.

I will say one thing about The Brain and his dolls: he never picks a crow. He has a very good eye for faces and shapes, and even Charlotte, his ever-loving wife, is not a crow, although she is not as young as she used to be. As for Doris Clare, she is one of the great beauties on the Ziegfeld roof in her day, and while her day is by no means yesterday, or even the day before, Doris holds on pretty well in the matter of looks. Giving her a shade the best of it, I will say that Doris is thirty-two or -three, but she has plenty of zing left in her, at that, and her hair

remains very blonde, no matter what.

In fact, The Brain does not care much if his dolls are blonde or brunette, because Cynthia Harris's hair is as black as the inside of a wolf, while Bobby Baker is betwixt and between, her hair being a light brown. Cynthia Harris is more of a Johnny-come-lately than Doris, being out of Mr. Earl Carroll's 'Vanities,' and I hear she first comes to New York as Miss Somebody in one of these beauty contests which she will win hands down if one of the judges does not get a big wink from a Miss Somebody Else.

Of course, Cynthia is doing some winking herself at this time, but it seems that she picks a guy to wink at thinking he is one of the judges, when he is nothing but a newspaperman and has no say whatever about the decision.

Well, Mr. Earl Carroll feels sorry for Cynthia, so he puts her in the 'Vanities' and lets her walk around raw, and The Brain sees her, and the next thing anybody knows she is riding in a big foreign automobile the size of a rum chaser, and is chucking a terrible swell.

Personally, I always consider Bobby Baker the smartest of all The Brain's dolls, because she is just middling as to looks and she does not have any of the advantages of life like Doris Clare and Cynthia Harris, such as jobs on the stage where they can walk around showing off their shapes to guys such as The Brain. Bobby Baker starts off as nothing but a private secretary to a guy in Wall Street, and naturally she is always wearing clothes, or anyway, as many clothes as an ordinary doll wears nowadays, which is not so many, at that.

It seems that The Brain once has some business with the guy Bobby works for and happens to get talking to Bobby, and she tells him how she always wishes to meet him, what with hearing and reading about him, and how he is just as handsome and romantic-looking as she always pictures him to herself.

Now I wish to say I will never call any doll a liar, being at

all times a gentleman, and for all I know, Bobby Baker may really think The Brain is handsome and romantic-looking, but personally I figure if she is not lying to him, she is at least a little excited when she makes such a statement to The Brain. The best you can give The Brain at this time is that he is very well dressed.

He is maybe forty years old, give or take a couple of years, and he is commencing to get a little bunched about the middle, what with sitting down at card-tables so much and never taking any exercise outside of walking guys such as me up and down in front of Mindy's for a few hours every night. He has a clean-looking face, always very white around the gills, and he has nice teeth and a nice smile when he wishes to smile, which is never at guys who owe him dough.

And I will say for The Brain he has what is called personality. He tells a story well, although he is always the hero of any story he tells, and he knows how to make himself agreeable to dolls in many ways. He has a pretty fair sort of education, and while dolls such as Cynthia and Doris and maybe Charlotte, too, will rather have a charge account at Cartier's than all the education in Yale and Harvard put together, it seems that Bobby Baker likes highbrow gab, so naturally she gets plenty of same from The Brain.

Well, pretty soon Bobby is riding around in a car bigger than Cynthia's, though neither is as big as Doris's car, and all the neighbours' children over in Flatbush, which is where Bobby hails from, are very jealous of her and running around spreading gossip about her, but keeping their eyes open for big cars themselves. Personally, I always figure The Brain lowers himself socially by taking up with a doll from Flatbush, especially as Bobby Baker soon goes in for literary guys, such as newspaper scribes and similar characters around Greenwich Village.

But there is no denying Bobby Baker is a very smart little doll, and in the four or five years she is one of The Brain's dolls,

she gets more dough out of him than all the others put together, because she is always telling him how much she loves him, and saying she cannot do without him, while Doris Clare and Cynthia Harris sometimes forget to mention this more than once or twice a month.

Now what happens early one morning but a guy by the name of Daffy Jack hauls off and sticks a shiv in The Brain's left side. It seems that this is done at the request of a certain party by the name of Homer Swing, who owes The Brain plenty of dough in a gambling transaction, and who becomes very indignant when The Brain presses him somewhat for payment. It seems that Daffy Jack, who is considered a very good shiv artist, aims at The Brain's heart, but misses it by a couple of inches, leaving The Brain with a very bad cut in his side which calls for some stitching.

Big Nig, the crap shooter, and I are standing at Fifty-second Street and Seventh Avenue along about 2 a.m. speaking of not much, when The Brain comes stumbling out of Fifty-second Street, and falls in Big Nig's arms, practically ruining a brand-new topcoat which Big Nig pays sixty bucks for a few days back with the blood that is coming out of the cut. Naturally, Big Nig is indignant about this, but we can see that it is no time to be speaking to The Brain about such matters. We can see that The Brain is carved up quite some, and is in a bad way.

Of course, we are not greatly surprised at seeing The Brain in this condition, because for years he is practically no price around this town, what with this guy and that being anxious to do something or other to him, but we are never expecting to see him carved up like a turkey. We are expecting to see him with a few slugs in him, and both Big Nig and me are very angry to think that there are guys around who will use such instruments as a knife on anybody.

But while we are thinking it over, The Brain says to me like this: 'Call Hymie Weissberger, and Doc Frisch,' he says, 'and take me home.'

Naturally, a guy such as The Brain wishes his lawyer before he wishes his doctor, and Hymie Weissberger is The Brain's mouthpiece, and a very sure-footed guy, at that.

'Well,' I say, 'we better take you to a hospital where you can get good attention at once.'

'No,' The Brain says. 'I wish to keep this secret. It will be a bad thing for me right now to have this get out, and if you take me to a hospital they must report it to the coppers. Take me home.'

Naturally, I say which home, being somewhat confused about The Brain's homes, and he seems to study a minute as if this is a question to be well thought out.

'Park Avenue,' The Brain says finally, so Big Nig stops a taxicab, and we help The Brain into the cab and tell the jockey to take us to the apartment house on Park Avenue near Sixty-fourth where The Brain's ever-loving wife Charlotte lives.

When we get there, I figure it is best for me to go up first and break the news gently to Charlotte, because I can see what a shock it is bound to be to any ever-loving wife to have her husband brought home in the early hours of the morning all shivved up.

Well, the door man and the elevator guy in the apartment house give me an argument about going up to The Brain's apartment, saying a blow-out of some kind is going on there, but after I explain to them that The Brain is sick, they let me go. A big fat butler comes to the door of the apartment when I ring, and I can see there are many dolls and guys in evening clothes in the apartment, and somebody is singing very loud.

The butler tries to tell me I cannot see Charlotte, but I finally convince him it is best, so by and by she comes to the door, and a very pleasant sight she is, at that, with jewellery all over her. I stall around awhile, so as not to alarm her too much, and then I tell her The Brain meets with an accident and that we have him outside in a cab, and ask her where we shall put him.

‘Why,’ she says, ‘put him in a hospital, of course. I am entertaining some very important people to-night, and I cannot have them disturbed by bringing in a hospital patient. Take him to hospital, and tell him I will come and see him tomorrow and bring him some broth.’

I try to explain to her that The Brain does not need any broth, but a nice place to lie down in, but finally she gets very testy with me and shuts the door in my face, saying as follows:

‘Take him to a hospital, I tell you. This is a ridiculous hour for him to be coming home, anyway. It is twenty years since he comes home so early.’

Then as I am waiting for the elevator, she opens the door again just a little bit and says:

‘By the way, is he hurt bad?’

I say we do not know how bad he is hurt, and she shuts the door again, and I go back to the cab again, thinking what a heartless doll she is, although I can see where it will be very inconvenient for her to bust up her party, at that.

The Brain is lying back in the corner of the cab, his eyes half closed, and by this time it seems that Big Nig stops the blood somewhat with a handkerchief, but The Brain acts somewhat weak to me. He sort of rouses himself when I climb in the cab, and when I tell him his ever-loving wife is not home he smiles a bit and whispers:

‘Take me to Doris.’

Now Doris lives in a big apartment house away over on West Seventy-second Street near the Drive, and I tell the taxi jockey to go there while The Brain seems to slide off into a doze. Then Big Nig leans over to me and says to me like this:

‘No use taking him there,’ Big Nig says. ‘I see Doris going out tonight all dressed up in her ermine coat with this actor guy, Jack Walen, she is struck on. It is a very great scandal around and about the way they carry on. Let us take him to Cynthia,’ Nig says. ‘She is a very large-hearted doll who will be very glad to take him in.’

Now Cynthia Harris has a big suite of rooms that cost fifteen G's a year in a big hotel just off Fifth Avenue, Cynthia being a doll who likes to be downtown so if she hears of anything coming off anywhere she can get there very rapidly. When we arrive at the hotel I call her on the house 'phone and tell her I must see her about something very important, so Cynthia says for me to come up.

It is now maybe three-fifteen, and I am somewhat surprised to find Cynthia home, at that, but there she is, and looking very beautiful indeed in a negligee with her hair hanging down, and I can see that The Brain is no chump when it comes to picking them. She gives me a hello pleasant enough, but as soon as I explain what I am there for, her kisser gets very stern and she says to me like this:

'Listen,' she says, 'I got trouble enough around this joint, what with two guys getting in a fight over me at a little gathering I have here last night and the house copper coming to split them out, and I do not care to have any more. Suppose it gets out that The Brain is here? What will the newspapers print about me? Think of my reputation!'

Well, in about ten minutes I can see there is no use arguing with her, because she can talk faster than I can, and mostly she talks about what a knock it will be to her reputation if she takes The Brain in, so I leave her standing at the door in her negligee, still looking very beautiful, at that.

There is now nothing for us to do but take The Brain to Bobby Baker, who lives in a duplex apartment in Sutton Place over by the East River, where the swells set up a colony of nice apartments in the heart of an old tenement-house neighborhood, and as we are on our way there with The Brain lying back in the cab just barely breathing, I say to Big Nig like this:

'Nig,' I say, 'when we get to Bobby's, we will carry The Brain in without asking her first and just dump him on her so she cannot refuse to take him in, although,' I say, 'Bobby Baker is a nice little doll, and I am pretty sure she will do anything she

can for him, especially,' I say, 'since he pays fifty G's for this apartment we are going to.'

So when the taxicab stops in front of Bobby's house, Nig and I take The Brain out of the cab and lug him between us up to the door of Bobby's apartment, where I ring the bell. Bobby opens the door herself, and I happen to see a guy's legs zip into a room in the apartment behind her, although of course there is nothing wrong in such a sight, even though the guy's legs are in pink pyjamas.

Naturally, Bobby is greatly astonished to see us with The Brain dangling between us, but she does not invite us in as I explain to her that The Brain is stabbed and that his last words are for us to take him to his Bobby. Furthermore, she does not let me finish my story which will be very sad indeed, if she keeps on listening.

'If you do not take him away from here at once,' Bobby says, before I am down to the pathetic part, 'I will call the cops and you guys will be arrested on suspicion that you know something about how he gets hurt.'

Then she slams the door on us, and we lug The Brain back down the stairs into the street, because all of a sudden it strikes us that Bobby is right, and if The Brain is found in our possession all stabbed up, and he happens to croak, we are in a very tough spot, because the cops just naturally love to refuse to believe guys like Big Nig and me, no matter what we say.

Furthermore, the same idea must hit the taxicab jockey after we lift The Brain out of the cab, because he is nowhere to be seen, and there we are away over by the East River in the early morning, with no other taxis in sight, and a cop liable to happen along any minute.

Well, there is nothing for us to do but get away from there, so Big Nig and I start moving, with me carrying The Brain's feet, and Big Nig his head. We get several blocks away from Sutton Place, going very slow and hiding in dark doorways when we hear anybody coming, and now we are in a section of

tenement houses, when all of a sudden up out of the basement of one of these tenements pops a doll.

She sees us before we can get in a dark place, and she seems to have plenty of nerve for a doll, because she comes right over to us and looks at Big Nig and me, and then looks at The Brain, who loses his hat somewhere along the line, so his pale face is plain to be seen by even the dim street light.

‘Why,’ the doll says, ‘it is the kind gentleman who gives me the five dollars for the apple—the money that buys the medicine that saves my Joey’s life. What is the matter?’

‘Well,’ I say to the doll, who is still raggedy and still red-headed, ‘there is nothing much the matter except if we do not get him somewhere soon, this guy will up and croak on us.’

‘Bring him into my house,’ she says, pointing to the joint she just comes out of. ‘It is not much of a place, but you can let him rest there until you get help. I am just going over here to a drug store to get some more medicine for Joey, although he is out of danger now, thanks to this gentleman.’

So we lug The Brain down the basement steps with the doll leading the way, and we follow her into a room that smells like a Chinese laundry and seems to be full of kids sleeping on the floor. There is only one bed in the room, and it is not much of a bed any way you take it, and there seems to be a kid in this bed, too, but the red-headed doll rolls this kid over to one side of the bed and motions us to lay The Brain alongside of the kid. Then she gets a wet rag and starts bathing The Brain’s noggin.

He finally opens his eyes and looks at the red-headed raggedy doll, and she grins at him very pleasant. When I think things over afterwards, I figure The Brain is conscious of much of what is going on when we are packing him around, although he does not say anything, maybe because he is too weak. Anyway, he turns his head to Big Nig, and says to him like this:

‘Bring Weissberger and Frisch as quick as you can,’ he says.

‘Anyway, get Weissberger. I do not know how bad I am hurt, and I must tell him some things.’

Well, The Brain is hurt pretty bad, as it turns out, and in fact he never gets well, but he stays in the basement dump until he dies three days later, with the red-headed raggedy doll nursing him alongside her sick kid Joey, because the croaker, old Doc Frisch, says it is no good moving The Brain, and may only make him pop off sooner. In fact, Doc Frisch is much astonished that The Brain lives at all, considering the way we lug him around.

I am present at The Brain’s funeral at Wiggins’s Funeral Parlours, like everybody else on Broadway, and I wish to say I never see more flowers in all my life. They are all over the casket and knee-deep on the floor, and some of the pieces must cost plenty, the price of flowers being what they are in this town nowadays. In fact, I judge it is the size and cost of the different pieces that makes me notice a little bundle of faded red carnations not much bigger than your fist that is laying alongside a pillow of violets the size of a horse blanket.

There is a small card tied to the carnations, and it says on this card, as follows: ‘To a kind gentleman,’ and it comes to my mind that out of all the thousands of dollars’ worth of flowers there, these faded carnations represent the only true sincerity. I mention this to Big Nig, and he says the chances are I am right, but that even true sincerity is not going to do The Brain any good where he is going.

Anybody will tell you that for off-hand weeping at a funeral The Brain’s ever-loving wife Charlotte does herself very proud indeed, but she is not one-two-seven with Doris Clare, Cynthia Harris, and Bobby Baker. In fact, Bobby Baker weeps so loud that there is some talk of heaving her out of the funeral altogether.

However, I afterwards hear that loud as they are at the funeral, it is nothing to the weep they all put on when it comes out that The Brain has Hymie Weissberger draw up a new will

while he is dying and leaves all his dough to the red-headed raggedy doll, whose name seems to be O'Halloran, and who is the widow of a bricklayer and has five kids.

Well, at first all the citizens along Broadway say it is a wonderful thing for The Brain to do, and serves his ever-loving wife and Doris and Cynthia and Bobby just right; and from the way one and all speaks you will think they are going to build a monument to The Brain for his generosity to the red-headed raggedy doll.

But about two weeks after he is dead, I hear citizens saying the chances are the red-headed raggedy doll is nothing but one of The Brain's old-time dolls, and that maybe the kids are his and that he leaves them the dough because his conscience hurts him at the finish, for this is the way Broadway is. But personally I know it cannot be true, for if there is one thing The Brain never has it is a conscience.

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Madame La Gimp

One night I am passing the corner of Fiftieth Street and Broadway, and what do I see but Dave the Dude standing in a doorway talking to a busted-down old Spanish doll by the name of Madame La Gimp. Or rather Madame La Gimp is talking to Dave the Dude, and what is more he is listening to her, because I can hear him say yes, yes, as he always does when he is really listening to anybody, which is very seldom.

Now this is a most surprising sight to me, because Madame La Gimp is not such an old doll as anybody will wish to listen to, especially Dave the Dude. In fact, she is nothing but an old haybag, and generally somewhat ginned up. For fifteen years, or maybe sixteen, I see Madame La Gimp up and down Broadway, or sliding along through the Forties, sometimes selling newspapers, and sometimes selling flowers, and in all these years I seldom see her but what she seems to have about half a heat on from drinking gin.

Of course, nobody ever takes the newspapers she sells, even after they buy them off of her, because they are generally yesterday's papers, and sometimes last week's, and nobody ever wants her flowers, even after they pay her for them, because they are flowers such as she gets off an undertaker over in Tenth Avenue, and they are very tired flowers, indeed.

Personally, I consider Madame La Gimp nothing but an old pest, but kind-hearted guys like Dave the Dude always stake her to a few pieces of silver when she comes shuffling along putting on the moan about her tough luck. She walks with a gimp in one leg, which is why she is called Madame La Gimp, and years ago I hear somebody say Madame La Gimp is once a

Spanish dancer, and a big shot on Broadway, but that she meets up with an accident which puts her out of the dancing dodge, and that a busted romance makes her become a gin-head.

I remember somebody telling me once that Madame La Gimp is quite a beauty in her day, and has her own servants, and all this and that, but I always hear the same thing about every bum on Broadway, male and female, including some I know are bums, in spades, right from taw, so I do not pay any attention to these stories.

Still, I am willing to allow that maybe Madame La Gimp is once a fair looker, at that, and the chances are has a fair shape, because once or twice I see her when she is not ginned up, and has her hair combed, and she is not so bad-looking, although even then if you put her in a claiming race I do not think there is any danger of anybody claiming her out of it.

Mostly she is wearing raggedy clothes, and busted shoes, and her grey hair is generally hanging down her face, and when I say she is maybe fifty years old I am giving her plenty the best of it. Although she is Spanish, Madame La Gimp talks good English, and in fact she can cuss in English as good as anybody I ever hear, barring Dave the Dude.

Well, anyway, when Dave the Dude sees me as he is listening to Madame La Gimp, he motions me to wait, so I wait until she finally gets through gabbing to him and goes gimping away. Then Dave the Dude comes over to me looking much worried.

‘This is quite a situation,’ Dave says. ‘The old doll is in a tough spot. It seems that she once has a baby which she calls by the name of Eulalie, being it is a girl baby, and she ships this baby off to her sister in a little town in Spain to raise up, because Madame La Gimp figures a baby is not apt to get much raising-up off of her as long as she is on Broadway. Well, this baby is on her way here. In fact,’ Dave says, ‘she will land next Saturday and here it is Wednesday already.’

‘Where is the baby’s papa?’ I ask Dave the Dude.

‘Well,’ Dave says, ‘I do not ask Madame La Gimp this, because I do not consider it a fair question. A guy who goes around this town asking where babies’ papas are, or even who they are, is apt to get the name of being nose-y. Anyway, this has nothing whatever to do with the proposition, which is that Madame La Gimp’s baby, Eulalie, is arriving here.

‘Now,’ Dave says, ‘it seems that Madame La Gimp’s baby, being now eighteen years old, is engaged to marry the son of a very proud old Spanish nobleman who lives in this little town in Spain, and it also seems that the very proud old Spanish nobleman, and his ever-loving wife, and the son, and Madame La Gimp’s sister, are all with the baby. They are making a tour of the whole world, and will stop over here a couple of days just to see Madame La Gimp.’

‘It is commencing to sound to me like a movie such as a guy is apt to see at a midnight show,’ I say.

‘Wait a minute,’ Dave says, getting impatient: ‘You are too gabby to suit me. Now it seems that the proud old Spanish nobleman does not wish his son to marry any lob, and one reason he is coming here is to look over Madame La Gimp, and see that she is okay. He thinks that Madame La Gimp’s baby’s own papa is dead, and that Madame La Gimp is now married to one of the richest and most aristocratic guys in America.’

‘How does the proud old Spanish nobleman get such an idea as this?’ I ask. ‘It is a sure thing he never sees Madame La Gimp, or even a photograph of her as she is at present.’

‘I will tell you how,’ Dave the Dude says. ‘It seems Madame La Gimp gives her baby the idea that such is the case in her letters to her. It seems Madame La Gimp does a little scrubbing business around a swell apartment hotel in Park Avenue that is called the Marberry, and she cops stationery there and writes her baby in Spain on this stationery, saying this is where she lives, and how rich and aristocratic her husband is. And what is more, Madame La Gimp has letters from her baby

sent to her care of the hotel and gets them out of the employees' mail.'

'Why,' I say, 'Madame La Gimp is nothing but an old fraud to deceive people in this manner, especially a proud old Spanish nobleman. And,' I say, 'this proud old Spanish nobleman must be something of a chump to believe a mother will keep away from her baby all these years, especially if the mother has plenty of dough, although of course I do not know just how smart a proud old Spanish nobleman can be.'

'Well,' Dave says, 'Madame La Gimp tells me the thing that makes the biggest hit of all with the proud old Spanish nobleman is that she keeps her baby in Spain all these years because she wishes her raised up a true Spanish baby in every respect until she is old enough to know what time it is. But I judge the proud old Spanish nobleman is none too bright, at that,' Dave says, 'because Madame La Gimp tells me he always lives in his little town which does not even have running water in the bathrooms.'

'But what I am getting at is this,' Dave says. 'We must have Madame La Gimp in a swell apartment in the Marberry with a rich and aristocratic guy for a husband by the time her baby gets here, because if the proud old Spanish nobleman finds out Madame La Gimp is nothing but a bum, it is a hundred to one he will cancel his son's engagement to Madame La Gimp's baby and break a lot of people's hearts, including his son's.'

'Madame La Gimp tells me her baby is daffy about the young guy, and he is daffy about her, and there are enough broken hearts in this town as it is. I know how I will get the apartment, so you go and bring me Judge Henry G. Blake for a rich and aristocratic husband, or anyway for a husband.'

Well, I know Dave the Dude to do many a daffy thing, but never a thing as daffy as this. But I know there is no use arguing with him when he gets an idea, because if you argue with Dave the Dude too much he is apt to reach over and lay

his Sunday punch on your snoot, and no argument is worth a punch on the snoot, especially from Dave the Dude.

So I go out looking for Judge Henry G. Blake to be Madame La Gimp's husband, although I am not so sure Judge Henry G. Blake will care to be anybody's husband, and especially Madame La Gimp's after he gets a load of her, for Judge Henry G. Blake is kind of a classy old guy.

To look at Judge Henry G. Blake, with his grey hair, and his nose glasses, and his stomach, you will think he is very important people, indeed. Of course, Judge Henry G. Blake is not a judge, and never is a judge, but they call him Judge because he looks like a judge, and talks slow, and puts in many long words, which very few people understand.

They tell me Judge Blake once has plenty of dough, and is quite a guy in Wall Street, and a high shot along Broadway, but he misses a few guesses at the market, and winds up without much dough, as guys generally do who miss guesses at the market. What Judge Henry G. Blake does for a living at this time nobody knows, because he does nothing much whatever, and yet he seems to be a producer in a small way at all times.

Now and then he makes a trip across the ocean with such as Little Manuel, and other guys who ride the tubs, and sits in with them on games of bridge, and one thing and another, when they need him. Very often when he is riding the tubs, Little Manuel runs into some guy he cannot cheat, so he has to call in Judge Henry G. Blake to outplay the guy on the level, although of course Little Manuel will much rather get a guy's dough by cheating him than by outplaying him on the level. Why this is, I do not know, but this is the way Little Manuel is.

Anyway, you cannot say Judge Henry G. Blake is a bum, especially as he wears good clothes, with a wing collar, and a derby hat, and most people consider him a very nice old man. Personally I never catch the judge out of line on any proposition whatever, and he always says hello to me, very pleasant.

It takes me several hours to find Judge Henry G. Blake, but

finally I locate him in Derle's billiards-room playing a game of pool with a guy from Providence, Rhode Island. It seems the judge is playing the guy from Providence for five cents a ball, and the judge is about thirteen balls behind when I step into the joint, because naturally at five cents a ball the judge wishes the guy from Providence to win, so as to encourage him to play for maybe twenty-five cents a ball, the judge being very cute this way.

Well, when I step in I see the judge miss a shot anybody can make blindfolded, but as soon as I give him the office I wish to speak to him, the judge hauls off and belts in every ball on the table, bingity-bing, the last shot being a bank that will make Al de Oro stop and think, because when it comes to pool, the old judge is just naturally a curly wolf.

Afterwards he tells me he is very sorry I make him hurry up this way, because of course after the last shot he is never going to get the guy from Providence to play him pool even for fun, and the judge tells me the guy sizes up as a right good thing, at that.

Now Judge Henry G. Blake is not so excited when I tell him what Dave the Dude wishes to see him about, but naturally he is willing to do anything for Dave, because he knows that guys who are not willing to do things for Dave the Dude often have bad luck. The judge tells me that he is afraid he will not make much of a husband because he tries it before several times on his own hook and is always a bust, but as long as this time it is not to be anything serious, he will tackle it. Anyway, Judge Henry G. Blake says, being aristocratic will come natural to him.

Well, when Dave the Dude starts out on any proposition, he is a wonder for fast working. The first thing he does is to turn Madame La Gimp over to Miss Billy Perry, who is now Dave's ever-loving wife which he takes out of tap-dancing in Miss Missouri Martin's Sixteen Hundred Club, and Miss Billy Perry calls in Miss Missouri Martin to help.

This is water on Miss Missouri Martin's wheel, because if there is anything she loves it is to stick her nose in other people's business, no matter what it is, but she is quite a help at that, although at first they have a tough time keeping her from telling Waldo Winchester, the scribe, about the whole cat-hop, so he will put a story in the Morning Item about it, with Miss Missouri Martin's name in it. Miss Missouri Martin does not believe in ever overlooking any publicity bets on the layout.

Anyway, it seems that between them Miss Billy Perry and Miss Missouri Martin get Madame La Gimp dolled up in a lot of new clothes, and run her through one of these beauty joints until she comes out very much changed, indeed. Afterwards I hear Miss Billy Perry and Miss Missouri Martin have quite a few words, because Miss Missouri Martin wishes to paint Madame La Gimp's hair the same colour as her own, which is a high yellow, and buy her the same kind of dresses which Miss Missouri Martin wears herself, and Miss Missouri Martin gets much insulted when Miss Billy Perry says no, they are trying to dress Madame La Gimp to look like a lady.

They tell me Miss Missouri Martin thinks some of putting the slug on Miss Billy Perry for this crack, but happens to remember just in time that Miss Billy Perry is now Dave the Dude's everloving wife, and that nobody in this town can put the slug on Dave's ever-loving wife, except maybe Dave himself.

Now the next thing anybody knows, Madame La Gimp is in a swell eight-or nine-room apartment in the Marberry, and the way this comes about is as follows: It seems that one of Dave the Dude's most important champagne customers is a guy by the name of Rodney B. Emerson, who owns the apartment, but who is at his summer home in Newport, with his family, or anyway with his ever-loving wife.

This Rodney B. Emerson is quite a guy along Broadway, and a great hand for spending dough and looking for laughs, and he is very popular with the mob. Furthermore, he is obliged to Dave the Dude, because Dave sells him good cham-

pagne when most guys are trying to hand him the old phonus bolonus, and naturally Rodney B. Emerson appreciates this kind treatment.

He is a short, fat guy, with a round, red face, and a big laugh, and the kind of a guy Dave the Dude can call up at his home in Newport and explain the situation and ask for the loan of the apartment, which Dave does. Well, it seems Rodney B. Emerson gets a big bang out of the idea, and he says to Dave the Dude like this: 'You not only can have the apartment, Dave, but I will come over and help you out. It will save a lot of explaining around the Marberry if I am there.'

So he hops right over from Newport, and joins in with Dave the Dude, and I wish to say Rodney B. Emerson will always be kindly remembered by one and all for his cooperation, and nobody will ever again try to hand him the phonus bolonus when he is buying champagne, even if he is not buying it off of Dave the Dude.

Well, it is coming on Saturday and the boat from Spain is due, so Dave the Dude hires a big town car, and puts his own driver, Wop Sam, on it, as he does not wish any strange driver tipping off anybody that it is a hired car. Miss Missouri Martin is anxious to go to the boat with Madame La Gimp, and take her jazz band, the Hi Hi Boys, from her Sixteen Hundred Club with her to make it a real welcome, but nobody thinks much of this idea. Only Madame La Gimp and her husband Judge Henry G. Blake, and Miss Billy Perry go, though the judge holds out for some time for Little Manuel, because Judge Blake says he wishes somebody around to tip him off in case there are any bad cracks made about him as a husband in Spanish, and Little Manuel is very Spanish.

The morning they go to meet the boat is the first time Judge Henry G. Blake gets a load of his ever-loving wife, Madame La Gimp, and by this time Miss Billy Perry and Miss Missouri Martin give Madame La Gimp such a going-over that she is by no means the worst looker in the world. In fact, she

looks first-rate, especially as she is off gin and says she is off it for good.

Judge Henry G. Blake is really quite surprised by her looks, as he figures all along she will turn out to be a crow. In fact, Judge Blake hurls a couple of shots into himself to nerve himself for the ordeal, as he explains it, before he appears to go to the boat. Between these shots, and the nice clothes, and the good cleaning-up Miss Billy Perry and Miss Missouri Martin give Madame La Gimp, she is really a pleasant sight to the judge.

They tell me the meeting at the dock between Madame La Gimp and her baby is very affecting indeed, and when the proud old Spanish nobleman and his wife, and their son, and Madame La Gimp's sister, all go into action, too, there are enough tears around there to float all the battleships we once sink for Spain. Even Miss Billy Perry and Judge Henry G. Blake do some first-class crying, although the chances are the judge is worked up to the crying more by the shots he takes for his courage than by the meeting.

Still, I hear the old judge does himself proud, what with kissing Madame La Gimp's baby plenty, and duking the proud old Spanish nobleman, and his wife, and son, and giving Madame La Gimp's sister a good strong hug that squeezes her tongue out.

It turns out that the proud old Spanish nobleman has white sideburns, and is entitled Conte de Something, so his ever-loving wife is the Contesa, and the son is a very nice-looking quiet young guy any way you take him, who blushes every time anybody looks at him. As for Madame La Gimp's baby, she is as pretty as they come, and many guys are sorry they do not get Judge Henry G. Blake's job as stepfather, because he is able to take a kiss at Madame La Gimp's baby on what seems to be very small excuse. I never see a nicer-looking young couple, and anybody can see they are very fond of each other, indeed.

Madame La Gimp's sister is not such a doll as I will wish to have sawed off on me, and is up in the paints as regards to age, but she is also very quiet. None of the bunch talk any English, so Miss Billy Perry and Judge Henry G. Blake are pretty much outsiders on the way uptown. Anyway, the judge takes the wind as soon as they reach the Marberry, because the judge is now getting a little tired of being a husband. He says he has to take a trip out to Pittsburgh to buy four or five coal-mines, but will be back the next day.

Well, it seems to me that everything is going perfect so far, and that it is good judgment to let it lay as it is, but nothing will do Dave the Dude but to have a reception the following night. I advise Dave the Dude against this idea, because I am afraid something will happen to spoil the whole cat-hop, but he will not listen to me, especially as Rodney B. Emerson is now in town and is a strong booster for the party, as he wishes to drink some of the good champagne he has planted in his apartment.

Furthermore, Miss Billy Perry and Miss Missouri Martin are very indignant at me when they hear about my advice, as it seems they both buy new dresses out of Dave the Dude's bank-roll when they are dressing up Madame La Gimp, and they wish to spring these dresses somewhere where they can be seen. So the party is on.

I get to the Marberry around nine o'clock and who opens the door of Madame La Gimp's apartment for me but Moosh, the door man from Miss Missouri Martin's Sixteen Hundred Club. Furthermore, he is in his Sixteen Hundred Club uniform, except he has a clean shave. I wish Moosh a hello, and he never raps to me but only bows, and takes my hat.

The next guy I see is Rodney B. Emerson in evening clothes, and the minute he sees me he yells out, 'Mister O. O. McIntyre.' Well, of course, I am not Mister O. O. McIntyre, and never put myself away as Mister O. O. McIntyre, and furthermore there is no resemblance whatever between Mister O. O. McIntyre and

me, because I am a fairly good-looking guy, and I start to give Rodney B. Emerson an argument, when he whispers to me like this:

‘Listen,’ he whispers, ‘we must have big names at this affair, so as to impress these people. The chances are they read the newspapers back there in Spain, and we must let them meet the folks they read about, so they will see Madame La Gimp is a real big shot to get such names to a party.’

Then he takes me by the arm and leads me to a group of people in a corner of the room, which is about the size of the Grand Central waiting-room.

‘Mister O. O. McIntyre, the big writer!’ Rodney B. Emerson says, and the next thing I know I am shaking hands with Mr. and Mrs. Conte, and their son, and with Madame La Gimp and her baby, and Madame La Gimp’s sister, and finally with Judge Henry G. Blake, who has on a swallowtail coat, and does not give me much of a tumble. I figure the chances are Judge Henry G. Blake is getting a swelled head already, not to tumble up a guy who helps him get his job, but even at that I wish to say the old judge looks immense in his swallowtail coat, bowing and giving one and all the old castor-oil smile.

Madame La Gimp is in a low-neck black dress and is wearing a lot of Miss Missouri Martin’s diamonds, such as rings and bracelets, which Miss Missouri Martin insists on hanging on her, although I hear afterwards that Miss Missouri Martin has Johnny Brannigan, the plain-clothes copper, watching these diamonds. I wonder at the time why Johnny is there, but figure it is because he is a friend of Dave the Dude’s. Miss Missouri Martin is no sucker, even if she is kind-hearted.

Anybody looking at Madame La Gimp will bet you all the coffee in Java that she never lives in a cellar over in Tenth Avenue, and drinks plenty of gin in her day. She has her grey hair piled up high on her head, with a big Spanish comb in it, and she reminds me of a picture I see somewhere, but I do not remember just where. And her baby, Eulalie, in a white dress

is about as pretty a little doll as you will wish to see, and nobody can blame Judge Henry G. Blake for copping a kiss off of her now and then.

Well, pretty soon I hear Rodney B. Emerson bawling, 'Mister Willie K. Vanderbilt,' and in comes nobody but Big Nig, and Rodney B. Emerson leads him over to the group and introduces him.

Little Manuel is standing alongside Judge Henry G. Blake, and he explains in Spanish to Mr. and Mrs. Conte and the others that 'Willie K. Vanderbilt' is a very large millionaire, and Mr. and Mrs. Conte seem much interested, anyway, though naturally Madame La Gimp and Judge Henry G. Blake are jerry to Big Nig, while Madame La Gimp's baby and the young guy are interested in nobody but each other.

Then I hear, 'Mister Al Jolson,' and in comes nobody but Tony Bertazzola, from the Chicken Club, who looks about as much like Al as I do like O. O. McIntyre, which is not at all. Next comes 'the Very Reverend John Roach Straton,' who seems to be Skeets Bolivar to me, then 'the Honourable Mayor James J. Walker,' and who is it but Good Time Charley Bernstein.

'Mister Otto H. Kahn,' turns out to be Rochester Red, and 'Mister Heywood Broun' is Nick the Greek, who asks me privately who Heywood Broun is, and gets very sore at Rodney B. Emerson when I describe Heywood Broun to him.

Finally there is quite a commotion at the door and Rodney B. Emerson announces, 'Mister Herbert Bayard Swope' in an extra loud voice which makes everybody look around, but it is nobody but the Pale Face Kid. He gets me to one side, too, and wishes to know who Herbert Bayard Swope is, and when I explain to him, the Pale Face Kid gets so swelled up he will not speak to Death House Donegan, who is only 'Mister William Muldoon.'

Well, it seems to me they are getting too strong when they announce, 'Vice-President of the United States, the Honourable Charles Curtis,' and in pops Guinea Mike, and I say as much to

Dave the Dude, who is running around every which way looking after things, but he only says, 'Well, if you do not know it is Guinea Mike, will you know it is not Vice-President Curtis?'

But it seems to me all this is most disrespectful to our leading citizens, especially when Rodney B. Emerson calls, 'The Honourable Police Commissioner, Mister Grover A. Whalen,' and in pops Wild William Wilkins, who is a very hot man at this time, being wanted in several spots for different raps. Dave the Dude takes personal charge of Wild William and removes a rod from his pants pocket, because none of the guests are supposed to come rodded up, this being strictly a social matter.

I watch Mr. and Mrs. Conte, and I do not see that these names are making any impression on them, and I afterwards find out that they never get any newspapers in their town in Spain except a little local bladder which only prints the home news. In fact, Mr. and Mrs. Conte seem somewhat bored, although Mr. Conte cheers up no little and looks interested when a lot of dolls drift in. They are mainly dolls from Miss Missouri Martin's Sixteen Hundred Club, and the Hot Box, but Rodney B. Emerson introduces them as 'Sophie Tucker,' and 'Theda Bara,' and 'Jeanne Eagels,' and 'Helen Morgan,' and 'Aunt Jemima,' and one thing and another.

Well, pretty soon in comes Miss Missouri Martin's jazz band, the Hi Hi Boys, and the party commences getting up steam, especially when Dave the Dude gets Rodney B. Emerson to breaking out the old grape. By and by there is dancing going on, and a good time is being had by one and all, including Mr. and Mrs. Conte. In fact, after Mr. Conte gets a couple of jolts of the old grape, he turns out to be a pretty nice old skate, even if nobody can understand what he is talking about.

As for Judge Henry G. Blake, he is full of speed, indeed. By this time anybody can see that the judge is commencing to believe that all this is on the level and that he is really entertaining celebrities in his own home. You put a quart of

good grape inside the old judge and he will believe anything. He soon dances himself plumb out of wind, and then I notice he is hanging around Madame La Gimp a lot.

Along about midnight, Dave the Dude has to go out into the kitchen and settle a battle there over a crap game, but otherwise everything is very peaceful. It seems that 'Herbert Bayard Swope,' 'Vice-President Curtis,' and 'Grover Whalen' get a little game going, when 'the Reverend John Roach Straton' steps up and cleans them in four passes, but it seems they soon discover that 'the Reverend John Roach Straton' is using tops on them, which are very dishonest dice, and so they put the slug on 'the Reverend John Roach Straton' and Dave the Dude has to split them out.

By and by I figure on taking the wind, and I look for Mr. and Mrs. Conte to tell them good night, but Mr. Conte and Miss Missouri Martin are still dancing, and Miss Missouri Martin is pouring conversation into Mr. Conte's ear by the bucketful, and while Mr. Conte does not savvy a word she says, this makes no difference to Miss Missouri Martin. Let Miss Missouri Martin do all the talking, and she does not care a whoop if anybody understands her.

Mrs. Conte is over in a corner with 'Herbert Bayard Swope,' or the Pale Face Kid, who is trying to find out from her by using hog Latin and signs on her if there is any chance for a good twenty-one dealer in Spain, and of course Mrs. Conte is not able to make heads or tails of what he means, so I hunt up Madame La Gimp.

She is sitting in a darkish corner off by herself and I really do not see Judge Henry G. Blake leaning over her until I am almost on top of them, so I cannot help hearing what the judge is saying.

'I am wondering for two days,' he says, 'if by any chance you remember me. Do you know who I am?'

'I remember you,' Madame La Gimp says. 'I remember you—oh, so very well, Henry. How can I forget you? But I have

no idea you recognize me after all these years.'

'Twenty of them now,' Judge Henry G. Blake says. 'You are beautiful then. You are still beautiful.'

Well, I can see the old grape is working first-class on Judge Henry G. Blake to make such remarks as this, although at that, in the half-light, with the smile on her face, Madame La Gimp is not so bad. Still, give me them carrying a little less weight for age.

'Well, it is all your fault,' Judge Henry G. Blake says. 'You go and marry that chile con carne guy, and look what happens!'

I can see there is no sense in me horning in on Madame La Gimp and Judge Henry G. Blake while they are cutting up old touches in this manner, so I think I will just say good-bye to the young people and let it go at that, but while I am looking for Madame La Gimp's baby, and her guy, I run into Dave the Dude.

'You will not find them here,' Dave says. 'By this time they are being married over at Saint Malachy's with my ever-loving wife and Big Nig standing up with them. We get the licence for them yesterday afternoon. Can you imagine a couple of young saps wishing to wait until they go plumb around the world before getting married?'

Well, of course, this elopement creates much excitement for a few minutes, but by Monday Mr. and Mrs. Conde and the young folks and Madame La Gimp's sister take a train for California to keep on going around the world, leaving us nothing to talk about but about old Judge Henry G. Blake and Madame La Gimp getting themselves married, too, and going to Detroit where Judge Henry G. Blake claims he has a brother in the plumbing business who will give him a job, although personally I think Judge Henry G. Blake figures to do a little booting on his own hook in and out of Canada. It is not like Judge Henry G. Blake to tie himself up to the plumbing business.

So there is nothing more to the story, except that Dave the

Dude is around a few days later with a big sheet of paper in his duke and very, very indignant.

‘If every single article listed here is not kicked back to the owners of the different joints in the Marberry that they are taken from by next Tuesday night, I will bust a lot of noses around this town,’ Dave says. ‘I am greatly mortified by such happenings at my social affairs, and everything must be returned at once. Especially,’ Dave says, ‘the baby grand piano that is removed from Apartment 9D.’

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Dancing Dan's Christmas

Now one time it comes on Christmas, and in fact it is the evening before Christmas, and I am in Good Time Charley Bernstein's little speakeasy in West Forty-seventh Street, wishing Charley a Merry Christmas and having a few hot Tom and Jerrys with him.

This hot Tom and Jerry is an old-time drink that is once used by one and all in this country to celebrate Christmas with, and in fact it is once so popular that many people think Christmas is invented only to furnish an excuse for hot Tom and Jerry, although of course this is by no means true.

But anybody will tell you that there is nothing that brings out the true holiday spirit like hot Tom and Jerry, and I hear that since Tom and Jerry goes out of style in the United States, the holiday spirit is never quite the same.

The reason hot Tom and Jerry goes out of style is because it is necessary to use rum and one thing and another in making Tom and Jerry, and naturally when rum becomes illegal in this country Tom and Jerry is also against the law, because rum is something that is very hard to get around town these days.

For a while some people try making hot Tom and Jerry without putting rum in it, but somehow it never has the same old holiday spirit, so nearly everybody finally gives up in disgust, and this is not surprising, as making Tom and Jerry is by no means child's play. In fact, it takes quite an expert to make good Tom and Jerry, and in the days when it is not illegal a good hot Tom and Jerry maker commands good wages and many friends.

Now of course Good Time Charley and I are not using rum in the Tom and Jerry we are making, as we do not wish to do anything illegal. What we are using is rye whisky that Good Time Charley gets on a doctor's prescription from a drug store, as we are personally drinking this hot Tom and Jerry and naturally we are not foolish enough to use any of Good Time Charley's own rye in it.

The prescription for the rye whisky comes from old Doc Moggs, who prescribes it for Good Time Charley's rheumatism in case Charley happens to get any rheumatism, as Doc Maggs says there is nothing better for rheumatism than rye whisky, especially if it is made up in a hot Tom and Jerry. In fact, old Doc Moggs comes around and has a few seidels of hot Tom and Jerry with us for his own rheumatism.

He comes around during the afternoon, for Good Time Charley and I start making this Tom and Jerry early in the day, so as to be sure to have enough to last us over Christmas, and it is now along towards six o'clock, and our holiday spirit is practically one hundred per cent.

Well, as Good Time Charley and I are expressing our holiday sentiments to each other over our hot Tom and Jerry, and I am trying to think up the poem about the night before Christmas and all through the house, which I know will interest Charley no little, all of a sudden there is a big knock at the front door, and when Charley opens the door who comes in carrying a large package under one arm but a guy by the name of Dancing Dan.

This Dancing Dan is a good-looking young guy, who always seems well-dressed, and he is called by the name of Dancing Dan because he is a great hand for dancing around and about with dolls in night clubs, and other spots where there is any dancing. In fact, Dan never seems to be doing anything else, although I hear rumours that when he is not dancing he is carrying on in a most illegal manner at one thing and another. But of course you can always hear rumours

in this town about anybody, and personally I am rather fond of Dancing Dan as he always seems to be getting a great belt out of life.

Anybody in town will tell you that Dancing Dan is a guy with no Barnaby whatever in him, and in fact he has about as much gizzard as anybody around, although I wish to say I always question his judgment in dancing so much with Miss Muriel O'Neill, who works in the Half Moon night club. And the reason I question his judgment in this respect is because everybody knows that Miss Muriel O'Neill is a doll who is very well thought of by Heine Schmitz, and Heine Schmitz is not such a guy as will take kindly to anybody dancing more than once and a half with a doll that he thinks well of.

This Heine Schmitz is a very influential citizen of Harlem, where he has large interests in beer, and other business enterprises, and it is by no means violating any confidence to tell you that Heine Schmitz will just as soon blow your brains out as look at you. In fact, I hear sooner. Anyway, he is not a guy to monkey with and many citizens take the trouble to advise Dancing Dan that he is not only away out of line in dancing with Miss Muriel O'Neill, but that he is knocking his own price down to where he is no price at all.

But Dancing Dan only laughs ha-ha, and goes on dancing with Miss Muriel O'Neill any time he gets a chance, and Good Time Charley says he does not blame him, at that, as Miss Muriel O'Neill is so beautiful that he will be dancing with her himself no matter what, if he is five years younger and can get a Roscoe out as fast as in the days when he runs with Paddy the Link and other fast guys.

Well, anyway, as Dancing Dan comes in he weighs up the joint in one quick peek, and then he tosses the package he is carrying into a corner where it goes plunk, as if there is something very heavy in it, and then he steps up to the bar alongside of Charley and me and wishes to know what we are drinking.

Naturally we start boosting hot Tom and Jerry to Dancing Dan, and he says he will take a crack at it with us, and after one crack, Dancing Dan says he will have another crack, and Merry Christmas to us with it, and the first thing anybody knows it is a couple of hours later and we are still having cracks at the hot Tom and Jerry with Dancing Dan, and Dan says he never drinks anything so soothing in his life. In fact, Dancing Dan says he will recommend Tom and Jerry to everybody he knows, only he does not know anybody good enough for Tom and Jerry, except maybe Miss Muriel O'Neill, and she does not drink anything with drugstore rye in it.

Well, several times while we are drinking this Tom and Jerry, customers come to the door of Good Time Charley's little speakeasy and knock, but by now Charley is commencing to be afraid they will wish Tom and Jerry, too, and he does not feel we will have enough for ourselves, so he hangs out a sign which says 'Closed on Account of Christmas,' and the only one he will let in is a guy by the name of Ooky, who is nothing but an old rum-dum, and who is going around all week dressed like Santa Claus and carrying a sign advertising Moe Lewinsky's clothing joint around in Sixth Avenue.

This Ooky is still wearing his Santa Claus outfit when Charley lets him in, and the reason Charley permits such a character as Ooky in his joint is because Ooky does the porter work for Charley when he is not Santa Claus for Moe Lewinsky, such as sweeping out, and washing the glasses, and one thing and another.

Well, it is about nine-thirty when Ooky comes in, and his puppies are aching, and he is all petered out generally from walking up and down and here and there with his sign, for any time a guy is Santa Claus for Moe Lewinsky he must earn his dough. In fact, Ooky is so fatigued, and his puppies hurt him so much, that Dancing Dan and Good Time Charley and I all feel very sorry for him, and invite him to have a few mugs of hot Tom and Jerry with us, and wish him plenty of Merry

Christmas.

But old Ooky is not accustomed to Tom and Jerry, and after about the fifth mug he folds up in a chair, and goes right to sleep on us. He is wearing a pretty good Santa Claus make-up, what with a nice red suit trimmed with white cotton, and a wig, and false nose, and long white whiskers, and a big sack stuffed with excelsior on his back, and if I do not know Santa Claus is not apt to be such a guy as will snore loud enough to rattle the windows, I will think Ooky is Santa Claus sure enough.

Well, we forget Ooky and let him sleep, and go on with our hot Tom and Jerry, and in the meantime we try to think up a few songs appropriate to Christmas, and Dancing Dan finally renders My Dad's Dinner Pail in a nice baritone and very loud, while I do first-rate with Will You Love Me in December As You Do in May? But personally I always think Good Time Charley Bernstein is a little out of line trying to sing a hymn in Jewish on such an occasion, and it causes words between us.

While we are singing many customers come to the door and knock, and then they read Charley's sign, and this seems to cause some unrest among them, and some of them stand outside saying it is a great outrage, until Charley sticks his noggin out the door and threatens to bust somebody's beezzer if they do not go on about their business and stop disturbing peaceful citizens.

Naturally the customers go away, as they do not wish their beezers busted, and Dancing Dan and Charley and I continue drinking our hot Tom and Jerry, and with each Tom and Jerry we are wishing one another a very Merry Christmas, and sometimes a very Happy New Year, although of course this does not go for Good Time Charley as yet, because Charley has his New Year separate from Dancing Dan and me.

By and by we take to waking Ooky up in his Santa Claus outfit and offering him more hot Tom and Jerry, and wishing him Merry Christmas, but Ooky only gets sore and calls us

names, so we can see he does not have the right holiday spirit in him, and let him alone until along about midnight when Dancing Dan wishes to see how he looks as Santa Claus.

So Good Time Charley and I help Dancing Dan pull off Ooky's outfit and put it on Dan, and this is easy as Ooky only has this Santa Claus outfit on over his ordinary clothes, and he does not even wake up when we are undressing him of the Santa Claus uniform.

Well, I wish to say I see many a Santa Claus in my time, but I never see a better-looking Santa Claus than Dancing Dan, especially after he gets the wig and white whiskers fixed just right, and we put a sofa pillow that Good Time Charley happens to have around the joint for the cat to sleep on down his pants to give Dancing Dan a nice fat stomach such as Santa Claus is bound to have.

In fact, after Dancing Dan looks at himself in a mirror awhile he is greatly pleased with his appearance, while Good Time Charley is practically hysterical, although personally I am commencing to resent Charley's interest in Santa Claus, and Christmas generally, as he by no means has any claim on these matters. But then I remember Charley furnishes the hot Tom and Jerry, so I am more tolerant towards him.

'Well,' Charley finally says, 'it is a great pity we do not know where there are some stockings hung up somewhere, because then,' he says, 'you can go around and stuff things in these stockings, as I always hear this is the main idea of a Santa Claus. But,' Charley says, 'I do not suppose anybody in this section has any stockings hung up, or if they have,' he says, 'the chances are they are so full of holes they will not hold anything. Anyway,' Charley says, 'even if there are any stockings hung up we do not have anything to stuff in them, although personally,' he says, 'I will gladly donate a few pints of Scotch.'

Well, I am pointing out that we have no reindeer and that a Santa Claus is bound to look like a terrible sap if he goes

around without any reindeer, but Charley's remarks seem to give Dancing Dan an idea, for all of a sudden he speaks as follows:

'Why,' Dancing Dan says, 'I know where a stocking is hung up. It is hung up at Miss Muriel O'Neill's flat over here in West Forty-ninth Street. This stocking is hung up by nobody but a party by the name of Gammer O'Neill, who is Miss Muriel O'Neill's grandmamma,' Dancing Dan says. 'Gammer O'Neill is going on ninety-odd,' he says, 'and Miss Muriel O'Neill tells me she cannot hold out much longer, what with one thing and another, including being a little childish in spots.

'Now,' Dancing Dan says, 'I remember Miss Muriel O'Neill is telling me just the other night how Gammer O'Neill hangs up her stocking on Christmas Eve all her life, and,' he says, 'I judge from what Miss Muriel O'Neill says that the old doll always believes Santa Claus will come along some Christmas and fill the stocking full of beautiful gifts. But,' Dancing Dan says, 'Miss Muriel O'Neill tells me Santa Claus never does this, although Miss Muriel O'Neill personally always takes a few gifts home and pops them into the stocking to make Gammer O'Neill feel better.

'But, of course,' Dancing Dan says, 'these gifts are nothing much because Miss Muriel O'Neill is very poor, and proud, and also good, and will not take a dime off of anybody, and I can lick the guy who says she will, although,' Dancing Dan says, 'between me, and Heine Schmitz, and a raft of other guys I can mention, Miss Muriel O'Neill can take plenty.'

Well, I know that what Dancing Dan states about Miss Muriel O'Neill is quite true, and in fact it is a matter that is often discussed on Broadway, because Miss Muriel O'Neill cannot get more than twenty bobs per week working in the Half Moon, and it is well known to one and all that this is no kind of dough for a doll as beautiful as Miss Muriel O'Neill.

'Now,' Dancing Dan goes on, 'it seems that while Gammer O'Neill is very happy to get whatever she finds in her stocking

on Christmas morning, she does not understand why Santa Claus is not more liberal, and,' he says, 'Miss Muriel O'Neill is saying to me that she only wishes she can give Gammer O'Neill one real big Christmas before the old doll puts her checks back in the rack.

'So,' Dancing Dan states, 'here is a job for us. Miss Muriel O'Neill and her grandmamma live all alone in this flat over in West Forty-ninth Street, and,' he says, 'at such an hour as this Miss Muriel O'Neill is bound to be working, and the chances are Gammer O'Neill is sound asleep, and we will just hop over there and Santa Claus will fill up her stocking with beautiful gifts.'

Well, I say, I do not see where we are going to get any beautiful gifts at this time of night, what with all the stores being closed, unless we dash into an all-night drug store and buy a few bottles of perfume and a bum toilet set as guys always do when they forget about their ever-loving wives until after store hours on Christmas Eve, but Dancing Dan says never mind about this, but let us have a few more Tom and Jerrys first.

So we have a few more Tom and Jerrys, and then Dancing Dan picks up the package he heaves into the corner, and dumps most of the excelsior out of Ooky's Santa Claus sack, and puts the bundle in, and Good Time Charley turns out all the lights but one, and leaves a bottle of Scotch on the table in front of Ooky for a Christmas gift, and away we go.

Personally, I regret very much leaving the hot Tom and Jerry, but then I am also very enthusiastic about going along to help Dancing Dan play Santa Claus, while Good Time Charley is practically overjoyed, as it is the first time in his life Charley is ever mixed up in so much holiday spirit. In fact, nothing will do Charley but that we stop in a couple of spots and have a few drinks to Santa Claus's health, and these visits are a big success, although everybody is much surprised to see Charley and me with Santa Claus, especially Charley, although nobody

recognizes Dancing Dan.

But of course there are no hot Tom and Jerrys in these spots we visit, and we have to drink whatever is on hand, and personally I will always believe that the noggin I have on me afterwards comes of mixing the drinks we get in these spots with my Tom and Jerry.

As we go up Broadway, headed for Forty-ninth Street, Charley and I see many citizens we know and give them a large hello, and wish them Merry Christmas, and some of these citizens shake hands with Santa Claus, not knowing he is nobody but Dancing Dan, although later I understand there is some gossip among these citizens because they claim a Santa Claus with such a breath on him as our Santa Claus has is a little out of line.

And once we are somewhat embarrassed when a lot of little kids going home with their parents from a late Christmas party somewhere gather about Santa Claus with shouts of childish glee, and some of them wish to climb up Santa Claus's legs. Naturally, Santa Claus gets a little peevish, and calls them a few names, and one of the parents comes up and wishes to know what is the idea of Santa Claus using such language, and Santa Claus takes a punch at the parent, all of which is no doubt most astonishing to the little kids who have an idea of Santa Claus as a very kindly old guy. But of course they do not know about Dancing Dan mixing the liquor we get in the spots we visit with his Tom and Jerry, or they will understand how even Santa Claus can lose his temper.

Well, finally we arrive in front of the place where Dancing Dan says Miss Muriel O'Neill and her grandmamma live, and it is nothing but a tenement house not far back of Madison Square Garden, and furthermore it is a walk-up, and at this time there are no lights burning in the joint except a gas jet in the main hall, and by the light of this jet we look at the names on the letter-boxes, such as you always find in the hall of these joints, and we see that Miss Muriel O'Neill and her grand-

mamma live on the fifth floor.

This is the top floor, and personally I do not like the idea of walking up five flights of stairs, and I am willing to let Dancing Dan and Good Time Charley go, but Dancing Dan insists we must all go, and finally I agree because Charley is commencing to argue that the right way for us to do is to get on the roof and let Santa Claus go down a chimney, and is making so much noise I am afraid he will wake somebody up.

So up the stairs we climb and finally we come to a door on the top floor that has a little card in a slot that says O'Neill, so we know we reach our destination. Dancing Dan first tries the knob, and right away the door opens, and we are in a little two- or three-room flat, with not much furniture in it, and what furniture there is is very poor. One single gas jet is burning near a bed in a room just off the one the door opens into, and by this light we see a very old doll is sleeping on the bed, so we judge this is nobody but Gammer O'Neill.

On her face is a large smile, as if she is dreaming of something very pleasant. On a chair at the head of the bed is hung a long black stocking, and it seems to be such a stocking as is often patched and mended, so I can see what Miss Muriel O'Neill tells Dancing Dan about her grandmamma hanging up her stocking is really true, although up to this time I have my doubts.

Well, I am willing to pack in after one gander at the old doll, especially as Good Time Charley is commencing to prowl around the flat to see if there is a chimney where Santa Claus can come down, and is knocking things over, but Dancing Dan stands looking down at Gammer O'Neill for a long time.

Finally he unslings the sack on his back, and takes out his package, and unties this package, and all of a sudden out pops a raft of big diamond bracelets, and diamond rings, and diamond brooches, and diamond necklaces, and I do not know what all else in the way of diamonds, and Dancing Dan and I begin stuffing these diamonds into the stocking and Good Time

Charley pitches in and helps us.

There are enough diamonds to fill the stocking to the muzzle, and it is no small stocking, at that, and I judge that Gammer O'Neill has a pretty fair set of bunting sticks when she is young. In fact, there are so many diamonds that we have enough left over to make a nice little pile on the chair after we fill the stocking plumb up, leaving a nice diamond-studded vanity case sticking out the top where we figure it will hit Gammer O'Neill's eye when she wakes up.

And it is not until I get out in the fresh air again that all of a sudden I remember seeing large headlines in the afternoon papers about a five-hundred-G's stick-up in the afternoon of one of the biggest diamond merchants in Maiden Lane while he is sitting in his office, and I also recall once hearing rumours that Dancing Dan is one of the best lone-hand git-'em-up guys in the world.

Naturally I commence to wonder if I am in the proper company when I am with Dancing Dan, even if he is Santa Claus. So I leave him on the next corner arguing with Good Time Charley about whether they ought to go and find some more presents somewhere, and look for other stockings to stuff, and I hasten on home, and go to bed.

The next day I find I have such a noggin that I do not care to stir around, and in fact I do not stir around much for a couple of weeks.

Then one night I drop around to Good Time Charley's little speakeasy, and ask Charley what is doing. 'Well,' Charley says, 'many things are doing, and personally,' he says, 'I am greatly surprised I do not see you at Gammer O'Neill's wake. You know Gammer O'Neill leaves this wicked old world a couple of days after Christmas,' Good Time Charley says, 'and,' he says, 'Miss Muriel O'Neill states that Doc Moggs claims it is at least a day after she is entitled to go, but she is sustained,' Charley says, 'by great happiness on finding her stocking filled with beautiful gifts on Christmas morning.'

‘According to Miss Muriel O’Neill,’ Charley says, ‘Gammer O’Neill dies practically convinced that there is a Santa Claus, although of course,’ he says, ‘Miss Muriel O’Neill does not tell her the real owner of the gifts, an all-right guy by the name of Shapiro, leaves the gifts with her after Miss Muriel O’Neill notifies him of the finding of same.’

‘It seems,’ Charley says, ‘this Shapiro is a tender-hearted guy, who is willing to help keep Gammer O’Neill with us a little longer when Doc Moggs says leaving the gifts with her will do it.’

‘So,’ Charley says, ‘everything is quite all right, as the coppers cannot figure anything except that maybe the rascal who takes the gifts from Shapiro gets conscience stricken, and leaves them the first place he can, and Miss Muriel O’Neill receives a ten-G’s reward for finding the gifts and returning them. And,’ Charley says, ‘I hear Dancing Dan is in San Francisco and is figuring on reforming and becoming a dancing teacher, so he can marry Miss Muriel O’Neill, and of course,’ he says, ‘we all hope and trust she never learns any details of Dancing Dan’s career.’

Well, it is Christmas Eve a year later that I run into a guy by the name of Shotgun Sam, who is mobbed up with Heine Schmitz in Harlem, and who is a very, very obnoxious character indeed.

‘Well, well, well,’ Shotgun says, ‘the last time I see you is another Christmas Eve like this, and you are coming out of Good Time Charley’s joint, and,’ he says, ‘you certainly have your pots on.’

‘Well, Shotgun,’ I say, ‘I am sorry you get such a wrong impression of me, but the truth is,’ I say, ‘on the occasion you speak of, I am suffering from a dizzy feeling in my head.’

‘It is all right with me,’ Shotgun says. ‘I have a tip this guy Dancing Dan is in Good Time Charley’s the night I see you, and Mockie Morgan and Gunner Jack and me are casing the joint, because,’ he says, ‘Heine Schmitz is all sore up at Dan over

some doll, although of course,' Shotgun says, 'it is all right now, as Heine has another doll.

'Anyway,' he says, 'we never get to see Dancing Dan. We watch the joint from six-thirty in the evening until daylight Christmas morning, and nobody goes in all night but old Ooky the Santa Claus guy in his Santa Claus make-up, and,' Shotgun says, 'nobody comes out except you and Good Time Charley and Ooky.

'Well,' Shotgun says, 'it is a great break for Dancing Dan he never goes in or comes out of Good Time Charley's, at that, because,' he says, 'we are waiting for him on the second-floor front of the building across the way with some nice little sawed-offs, and are under orders from Heine not to miss.'

'Well, Shotgun,' I say, 'Merry Christmas.'

'Well, all right,' Shotgun says, 'Merry Christmas.'

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Lillian

What I always say is that Wilbur Willard is nothing but a very lucky guy, because what is it but luck that has been teetering along Forty-ninth Street one cold snowy morning when Lillian is merowing around the sidewalk looking for her mamma?

And what is it but luck that has Wilbur Willard all mulled up to a million, what with him having been sitting out a few seidels of Scotch with a friend by the name of Haggerty in an apartment over in Fifty-ninth Street? Because if Wilbur Willard is not mulled up he will see Lillian as nothing but a little black cat, and give her plenty of room, for everybody knows that black cats are terribly bad luck, even when they are only kittens.

But being mulled up like I tell you, things look very different to Wilbur Willard, and he does not see Lillian as a little black kitten scabbling around in the snow. He sees a beautiful leopard, because a copper by the name of O'Hara, who is walking past about then, and who knows Wilbur Willard, hears him say:

'Oh, you beautiful leopard!'

The copper takes a quick peek himself, because he does not wish any leopards running around his beat, it being against the law, but all he sees, as he tells me afterwards, is this rumpot ham, Wilbur Willard, picking up a scrawny little black kitten and shoving it in his overcoat pocket, and he also hears Wilbur say:

'Your name is Lillian.'

Then Wilbur teeters on up to his room on the top floor of

an old fleabag in Eighth Avenue that is called the Hotel de Brussels, where he lives quite a while, because the management does not mind actors, the management of the Hotel de Brussels being very broad-minded, indeed.

There is some complaint this same morning from one of Wilbur's neighbours, an old burlesque doll by the name of Minnie Madigan, who is not working since Abraham Lincoln is assassinated, because she hears Wilbur going on in his room about a beautiful leopard, and calls up the clerk to say that an hotel which allows wild animals is not respectable. But the clerk looks in on Wilbur and finds him playing with nothing but a harmless-looking little black kitten, and nothing comes of the old doll's beef, especially as nobody ever claims the Hotel de Brussels is respectable anyway, or at least not much.

Of course when Wilbur comes out from under the ether next afternoon he can see Lillian is not a leopard, and in fact Wilbur is quite astonished to find himself in bed with a little black kitten, because it seems Lillian is sleeping on Wilbur's chest to keep warm. At first Wilbur does not believe what he sees, and puts it down to Haggerty's Scotch, but finally he is convinced, and so he puts Lillian in his pocket, and takes her over to the Hot Box night club and gives her some milk, of which it seems Lillian is very fond.

Now where Lillian comes from in the first place of course nobody knows. The chances are somebody chucks her out of a window into the snow, because people are always chucking kittens, and one thing and another, out of windows in New York. In fact, if there is one thing this town has plenty of, it is kittens, which finally grow up to be cats, and go snooping around ash cans, and merowing on roofs, and keeping people from sleeping good.

Personally, I have no use for cats, including kittens, because I never see one that has any too much sense, although I know a guy by the name of Pussy McGuire who makes a first-rate living doing nothing but stealing cats, and sometimes

dogs, and selling them to old dolls who like such things for company. But Pussy only steals Persian and Angora cats, which are very fine cats, and of course Lillian is no such cat as this. Lillian is nothing but a black cat, and nobody will give you a dime a dozen for black cats in this town, as they are generally regarded as very bad jinxes.

Furthermore, it comes out in a few weeks that Wilbur Willard can just as well name her Herman, or Sidney, as not, but Wilbur sticks to Lillian, because this is the name of his partner when he is in vaudeville years ago. He often tells me about Lillian Withington when he is mulled up, which is more often than somewhat, for Wilbur is a great hand for drinking Scotch, or rye, or bourbon, or gin, or whatever else there is around for drinking, except water. In fact, Wilbur Willard is a high-class drinking man, and it does no good to tell him it is against the law to drink in this country, because it only makes him mad, and he says to the dickens with the law, only Wilbur Willard uses a much rougher word than dickens.

‘She is like a beautiful leopard,’ Wilbur says to me about Lillian Withington. ‘Black-haired, and black-eyed, and all ripply, like a leopard I see in an animal act on the same bill at the Palace with us once. We are headliners then,’ he says, ‘Willard and Withington, the best singing and dancing act in the country.’

‘I pick her up in San Antonia, which is a spot in Texas,’ Wilbur says. ‘She is not long out of a convent, and I just lose my old partner, Mary McGee, who ups and dies on me of pneumonia down there. Lillian wishes to go on the stage, and joins out with me. A natural-born actress with a great voice. But like a leopard,’ Wilbur says. ‘Like a leopard. There is cat in her, no doubt of this, and cats and women are both ungrateful. I love Lillian Withington. I wish to marry her. But she is cold to me. She says she is not going to follow the stage all her life. She says she wishes money, and luxury, and a fine home and of course a guy like me cannot give a doll such things.’

'I wait on her hand and foot,' Wilbur says. 'I am her slave. There is nothing I will not do for her. Then one day she walks in on me in Boston very cool and says she is quitting me. She says she is marrying a rich guy there. Well, naturally it busts up the act and I never have the heart to look for another partner, and then I get to belting that old black bottle around, and now what am I but a cabaret performer?'

Then sometimes he will bust out crying, and sometimes I will cry with him, although the way I look at it, Wilbur gets a pretty fair break, at that, in getting rid of a doll who wishes things he cannot give her. Many a guy in this town is tangled up with a doll who wishes things he cannot give her, but who keeps him tangled up just the same and busting himself trying to keep her quiet.

Wilbur makes pretty fair money as an entertainer in the Hot Box, though he spends most of it for Scotch, and he is not a bad entertainer, either. I often go to the Hot Box when I am feeling blue to hear him sing Melancholy Baby, and Moonshine Valley and other sad songs which break my heart. Personally, I do not see why any doll cannot love Wilbur, especially if they listen to him sing such songs as Melancholy Baby when he is mulled up good, because he is a tall, nice-looking guy with long eyelashes, and sleepy brown eyes, and his voice has a low moaning sound that usually goes very big with the dolls. In fact, many a doll does do some pitching to Wilbur when he is singing in the Hot Box, but somehow Wilbur never gives them a tumble, which I suppose is because he is thinking only of Lillian Withington.

Well, after he gets Lillian, the black kitten, Wilbur seems to find a new interest in life, and Lillian turns out to be right cute, and not bad-looking after Wilbur gets her fed up good. She is blacker than a yard up a chimney, with not a white spot on her, and she grows so fast that by and by Wilbur cannot carry her in his pocket any more, so he puts a collar on her and leads her round. So Lillian becomes very well known on Broadway,

what with Wilbur taking her many places, and finally she does not even have to be led around by Wilbur, but follows him like a pooch. And in all the Roaring Forties there is no pooch that cares to have any truck with Lillian, for she will leap aboard them quicker than you can say scat, and scratch and bite them until they are very glad indeed to get away from her.

But of course the pooches in the Forties are mainly nothing but Chows, and Pekes, and Poms, or little woolly white poodles, which are led around by blonde dolls, and are not fit to take their own part against a smart cat. In fact, Wilbur Willard is finally not on speaking terms with any doll that owns a pooch between Times Square and Columbus Circle, and they are all hoping that both Wilbur and Lillian will go lay down and die somewhere. Furthermore, Wilbur has a couple of battles with guys who also belong to the dolls, but Wilbur is no sucker in a battle if he is not mulled up too much and leg-weary.

After he is through entertaining people in the Hot Box, Wilbur generally goes around to any speakeasies which may still be open, and does a little off-hand drinking on top of what he already drinks down in the Hot Box, which is plenty, and although it is considered very risky in this town to mix Hot Box liquor with any other, it never seems to bother Wilbur. Along towards daylight he takes a couple of bottles of Scotch over to his room in the Hotel de Brussels and uses them for a nightcap, so by the time Wilbur Willard is ready to slide off to sleep he has plenty of liquor of one kind and another inside him, and he sleeps pretty.

Of course nobody on Broadway blames Wilbur so very much for being such a rumpot, because they know about him loving Lillian Withington, and losing her, and it is considered a reasonable excuse in this town for a guy to do some drinking when he loses a doll, which is why there is so much drinking here, but it is a mystery to one and all how Wilbur stands off all this liquor without croaking. The cemeteries are full of guys who do a lot less drinking than Wilbur, but he never even

seems to feel extra tough, or if he does he keeps it to himself and does not go around saying it is the kind of liquor you get nowadays.

He costs some of the boys around Mindy's plenty of dough one winter, because he starts in doing most of his drinking after hours in Good Time Charley's speakeasy, and the boys lay a price of four to one against him lasting until spring, never figuring a guy can drink very much of Good Time Charley's liquor and keep on living. But Wilbur Willard does it just the same, so everybody says the guy is naturally superhuman, and lets it go at that.

Sometimes Wilbur drops into Mindy's with Lillian following him on the look-out for pooches, or riding on his shoulder if the weather is bad, and the two of them will sit with us for hours chewing the rag about one thing and another. At such times Wilbur generally has a bottle on his hip and takes a shot now and then, but of course this does not come under the head of serious drinking with him. When Lillian is with Wilbur she always lays as close to him as she can get and anybody can see that she seems to be very fond of Wilbur, and that he is very fond of her, although he sometimes forgets himself and speaks of her as a beautiful leopard. But of course this is only a slip of the tongue, and anyway if Wilbur gets any pleasure out of thinking Lillian is a leopard, it is nobody's business but his own.

'I suppose she will run away from me some day,' Wilbur says, running his hand over Lillian's back until her fur crackles. 'Yes, although I give her plenty of liver and catnip, and one thing and another, and all my affection, she will probably give me the shake. Cats are like women, and women are like cats. They are both very ungrateful.'

'They are both generally bad luck,' Big Nig, the crap shooter, says. 'Especially cats, and most especially black cats.'

Many other guys tell Wilbur about black cats being bad luck, and advise him to slip Lillian into the North River some

night with a sinker on her, but Wilbur claims he already has all the bad luck in the world when he loses Lillian Withington, and that Lillian, the cat, cannot make it any worse, so he goes on taking extra good care of her, and Lillian goes on getting bigger and bigger, until I commence thinking maybe there is some St. Bernard in her.

Finally I commence to notice something funny about Lillian. Sometimes she will be acting very loving towards Wilbur, and then again she will be very unfriendly to him, and will spit at him, and snatch at him with her claws, very hostile. It seems to me that she is all right when Willard is mulled up, but is as sad and fretful as he is himself when he is only a little bit mulled. And when Lillian is sad and fretful she makes it very tough indeed on the pooches in the neighborhood of the Brussels.

In fact, Lillian takes to pooch-hunting, sneaking off when Wilbur is getting his rest, and running pooches bow-legged, especially when she finds one that is not on a leash. A loose pooch is just naturally cherry pie for Lillian.

Well, of course, this causes great indignation among the dolls who own the pooches, particularly when Lillian comes home one day carrying a Peke as big as she is herself by the scruff of the neck, and with a very excited blonde doll following her and yelling bloody murder outside Wilbur Willard's door when Lillian pops into Wilbur's room through a hole he cuts in the door for her, still lugging the Peke. But it seems that instead of being mad at Lillian and giving her a pasting for such goings on, Wilbur is somewhat pleased, because he happens to be still in a fog when Lillian arrives with the Peke, and is thinking of Lillian as a beautiful leopard.

'Why,' Wilbur says, 'this is devotion, indeed. My beautiful leopard goes off into the jungle and fetches me an antelope for dinner.'

Now of course there is no sense whatever to this, because a Peke is certainly not anything like an antelope, but the

blonde doll outside Wilbur's door hears Wilbur mumble, and gets the idea that he is going to eat her Peke for dinner and the squawk she puts up is very terrible. There is plenty of trouble around the Brussels in chilling the blonde doll's beef over Lillian snagging her Peke, and what is more the blonde doll's ever-loving guy, who turns out to be a tough Ginney bootlegger by the name of Gregorio, shows up at the Hot Box the next night and wishes to put the slug on Wilbur Willard.

But Wilbur rounds him up with a few drinks and by singing Melancholy Baby to him, and before he leaves the Ginney gets very sentimental towards Wilbur, and Lillian, too, and wishes to give Wilbur five bucks to let Lillian grab the Peke again, if Lillian will promise not to bring it back. It seems Gregorio does not really care for the Peke, and is only acting quarrelsome to please the blonde doll and make her think he loves her dearly.

But I can see Lillian is having different moods, and finally I ask Wilbur if he notices it.

'Yes,' he says, very sad, 'I do not seem to be holding her love. She is getting very fickle. A guy moves on to my floor at the Brussels the other day with a little boy, and Lillian becomes very fond of this kid at once. In fact, they are great friends. Ah, well,' Wilbur says, 'cats are like women. Their affection does not last.'

I happen to go over to the Brussels a few days later to explain to a guy by the name of Crutchy, who lives on the same floor as Wilbur Willard, that some of our citizens do not like his face and that it may be a good idea for him to leave town, especially if he insists on bringing ale into their territory, and I see Lillian out in the hall with a youngster which I judge is the kid Wilbur is talking about. This kid is maybe three years old, and very cute, what with black hair, and black eyes, and he is woolling Lillian around the hall in a way that is most surprising, for Lillian is not such a cat as will stand for much woolling around, not even from Wilbur Willard.

I am wondering how anybody comes to take such a kid to a joint like the Brussels, but I figure it is some actor's kid, and that maybe there is no mamma for it. Later I am talking to Wilbur about this, and he says:

'Well, if the kid's old man is an actor, he is not working at it. He sticks close to his room all the time, and he does not allow the kid to go anywhere but in the hall, and I feel sorry for the little guy, which is why I allow Lillian to play with him.'

Now it comes on a very cold spell, and a bunch of us are sitting in Mindy's along towards five o'clock in the morning when we hear fire engines going past. By and by in comes a guy by the name of Kansas, who is named Kansas because he comes from Kansas, and who is a crap shooter by trade.

'The old Brussels is on fire,' this guy Kansas says.

'She is always on fire,' Big Nig says, meaning there is always plenty of hot stuff going on around the Brussels.

About this time who walks in but Wilbur Willard, and anybody can see he is just naturally floating. The chances are he comes from Good Time Charley's, and he is certainly carrying plenty of pressure. I never see Wilbur Willard mulled up more. He does not have Lillian with him, but then he never takes Lillian to Good Time Charley's, because Charley hates cats.

'Hey, Wilbur,' Big Nig says, 'your joint, the Brussels, is on fire.'

'Well,' Wilbur says, 'I am a little firefly, and I need a light. Let us go where there is fire.'

The Brussels is only a few blocks from Mindy's, and there is nothing else to do just then, so some of us walk over to Eighth Avenue with Wilbur teetering along ahead of us. The old shack is certainly roaring good when we get in sight of it, and the firemen are tossing water into it, and the coppers have the fire lines out to keep the crowd back, although there is not much of a crowd at such an hour in the morning.

'Is it not beautiful?' Wilbur Willard says, looking up at the

flames. 'Is it not like a fairy palace all lighted up this way?'

You see, Wilbur does not realize the joint is on fire, although guys and dolls are running out of it every which way, most of them half dressed, or not dressed at all, and the firemen are getting out the life nets in case anybody wishes to hop out of the windows.

'It is certainly beautiful,' Wilbur says. 'I must get Lillian so she can see this.'

And before anybody has time to think, there is Wilbur Willard walking into the front door of the Brussels as if nothing happens. The firemen and the coppers are so astonished all they can do is holler at Wilbur, but he pays no attention whatever. Well, naturally everybody figures Wilbur is a gone gosling, but in about ten minutes he comes walking out of this same door through the fire and smoke as cool as you please, and he has Lillian in his arms.

'You know,' Wilbur says, coming over to where we are standing with our eyes popping out, 'I have to walk all the way up to my floor because the elevators seem to be out of commission. The service is getting terrible in this hotel. I will certainly make a strong beef to the management about it as soon as I pay something on my account.'

Then what happens but Lillian lets out a big mer-ow, and hops out of Wilbur's arms and skips past the coppers and the firemen with her, back all humped up, and the next thing anybody knows she is tearing through the front door of the old hotel and making plenty of speed.

'Well, well,' Wilbur says, looking much surprised, 'there goes Lillian.'

And what does this daffy Wilbur Willard do but turn and go marching back into the Brussels again, and by this time the smoke is pouring out of the front doors so thick he is out of sight in a second. Naturally he takes the coppers and firemen by surprise, because they are not used to guys walking in and out of fires on them.

This time anybody standing around will lay you plenty of odds, two and a half and maybe three to one that Wilbur never shows up again, because the old Brussels is now just popping with fire and smoke from the lower windows, although there does not seem to be quite so much fire in the upper story. Everybody seems to be out of the joint, and even the firemen are fighting the blaze from the outside because the Brussels is so old and ramshackly there is no sense in them risking the floors.

I mean everybody is out of the joint except Wilbur Willard and Lillian, and we figure they are getting a good frying somewhere inside, although Feet Samuels is around offering to take thirteen to five for a few small bets that Lillian comes out okay, because Feet claims that a cat has nine lives and that is a fair bet at the price.

Well, up comes a swell-looking doll all heated up about something and pushing and clawing her way through the crowd up to the ropes and screaming until you can hardly hear yourself think, and about this same minute everybody hears a voice going ai-lee-hihee-hoo, like a Swiss yodeller, which comes from the roof of the Brussels, and looking up what do we see but Wilbur Willard standing up there on the edge of the roof, high above the fire and smoke, and yodelling very loud.

Under one arm he has a big bundle of some kind, and under the other he has the little kid I see playing in the hall with Lillian. As he stands up there going ai-lee-hi-hee-hoo, the swell-dressed doll near us begins yipping louder than Wilbur is yodelling, and the firemen rush over under him with a life net.

Wilbur lets go another ai-lee-hi-hee-hoo, and down he comes all spraddled out, with the bundle and the kid, but he hits the net sitting down and bounces up and back again for a couple of minutes before he finally settles. In fact, Wilbur is enjoying the bouncing, and the chances are he will be bouncing yet if the firemen do not drop their hold on the net and let him fall to the ground.

Then Wilbur steps out of the net, and I can see the bundle is a rolled-up blanket with Lillian's eyes peeking out of one end. He still has the kid under the other arm with his head stuck out in front, and his legs stuck out behind, and it does not seem to me that Wilbur is handling the kid as careful as he is handling Lillian. He stands there looking at the firemen with a very sneering look, and finally he says:

'Do not think you can catch me in your net unless I wish to be caught. I am a butterfly, and very hard to overtake.'

Then all of a sudden the swell-dressed doll who is doing so much hollering, piles on top of Wilbur and grabs the kid from him and begins hugging and kissing it.

'Wilbur,' she says, 'God bless you, Wilbur, for saving my baby! Oh, thank you, Wilbur, thank you! My wretched husband kidnaps and runs away with him, and it is only a few hours ago that my detectives find out where he is.'

Wilbur gives the doll a funny look for about half a minute and starts to walk away, but Lillian comes wiggling out of the blanket, looking and smelling pretty much singed up, and the kid sees Lillian and begins hollering for her, so Wilbur finally hands Lillian over to the kid. And not wishing to leave Lillian, Wilbur stands around somewhat confused, and the doll gets talking to him, and finally they go away together, and as they go Wilbur is carrying the kid, and the kid is carrying Lillian, and Lillian is not feeling so good from her burns.

Furthermore, Wilbur is probably more sober than he ever is before in years at this hour in the morning, but before they go I get a chance to talk some to Wilbur when he is still rambling somewhat, and I make out from what he says that the first time he goes to get Lillian he finds her in his room and does not see hide or hair of the little kid and does not even think of him, because he does not know what room the kid is in, anyway, having never noticed such a thing.

But the second time he goes up, Lillian is sniffing at the crack under the door of a room down the hall from Wilbur's

and Wilbur says he seems to remember seeing a trickle of something like water coming out of the crack.

‘And,’ Wilbur says, ‘as I am looking for a blanket for Lillian, and it will be a bother to go back to my room, I figure I will get one out of this room. I try the knob but the door is locked, so I kick it in, and walk in to find the room full of smoke, and fire is shooting through the windows very lovely, and when I grab a blanket off the bed for Lillian, what is under the blanket but the kid?’

‘Well,’ Wilbur says, ‘the kid is squawking, and Lillian is merowing, and there is so much confusion generally that it makes me nervous, so I figure we better go up on the roof and let the stink blow off us, and look at the fire from there. It seems there is a guy stretched out on the floor of the room alongside an upset table between the door and the bed. He has a bottle in one hand, and he is dead. Well, naturally there is no percentage in lugging a dead guy along, so I take Lillian and the kid and go up on the roof, and we just naturally fly off like humming birds. Now I must get a drink,’ Wilbur says, ‘I wonder if anybody has anything on their hip?’

Well, the papers are certainly full of Wilbur and Lillian the next day, especially Lillian, and they are both great heroes.

But Wilbur cannot stand the publicity very long, because he never has any time to himself for his drinking, what with the scribes and the photographers hopping on him every few minutes wishing to hear his story, and to take more pictures of him and Lillian, so one night he disappears, and Lillian disappears with him.

About a year later it comes out that he marries his old doll, Lillian Withington-Harmon, and falls into a lot of dough, and what is more he cuts out the liquor and becomes quite a useful citizen one way and another. So everybody has to admit that black cats are not always bad luck, although I say Wilbur’s case is a little exceptional because he does not start out knowing Lillian is a black cat, but thinking she is a leopard.

I happen to run into Wilbur one day all dressed up in good clothes and jewellery and chucking quite a swell.

‘Wilbur,’ I say to him, ‘I often think how remarkable it is the way Lillian suddenly gets such an attachment for the little kid and remembers about him being in the hotel and leads you back there a second time to the right room. If I do not see this come off with my own eyes, I will never believe a cat has brains enough to do such a thing, because I consider cats extra dumb.’

‘Brains nothing,’ Wilbur says. ‘Lillian does not have brains enough to grease a gimlet. And what is more, she has no more attachment for the kid than a jack rabbit. The time has come,’ Wilbur says, ‘to expose Lillian. She gets a lot of credit which is never coming to her. I will now tell you about Lillian, and nobody knows this but me.’

‘You see,’ Wilbur says, ‘when Lillian is a little kitten I always put a little Scotch in her milk, partly to help make her good and strong, and partly because I am never no hand to drink alone, unless there is nobody with me. Well, at first Lillian does not care so much for this Scotch in her milk, but finally she takes a liking to it, and I keep making her toddy stronger until in the end she will lap up a good big snort without any milk for a chaser, and yell for more. In fact, I suddenly realize that Lillian becomes a rumpot, just like I am in those days, and simply must have her grog, and it is when she is good and rummed up that Lillian goes off snatching Pekes, and acting tough generally.’

‘Now,’ Wilbur says, ‘the time of the fire is about the time I get home every morning and give Lillian her schnapps. But when I go into the hotel and get her the first time I forget to Scotch her up, and the reason she runs back into the hotel is because she is looking for her shot. And the reason she is sniffing at the kid’s door is not because the kid is in there but because the trickle that is coming through the crack under the door is nothing but Scotch that is running out of the bottle in

the dead guy's hand. I never mention this before because I figure it may be a knock to a dead guy's memory,' Wilbur says. 'Drinking is certainly a disgusting thing, especially secret drinking.'

'But how is Lillian getting along these days?' I ask Wilbur Willard.

'I am greatly disappointed in Lillian,' he says. 'She refuses to reform when I do, and the last I hear of her she takes up with Gregorio, the Ginney bootlegger, who keeps her well Scotched up all the time so she will lead his blonde doll's Peke a dog's life.'

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Little Miss Marker

One evening along toward seven o'clock, many citizens are standing out on Broadway in front of Mindy's restaurant, speaking of one thing and another, and particularly about the tough luck they have playing the races in the afternoon, when who comes up the street with a little doll hanging on to his right thumb but a guy by the name of Sorrowful.

This guy is called Sorrowful because this is the way he always is about no matter what, and especially about the way things are with him when anybody tries to put the bite on him. In fact, if anybody who tries to put the bite on Sorrowful can listen to him for two minutes about how things are with him and not bust into tears, they must be very hard-hearted, indeed.

Regret, the horse player, is telling me that he once tries to put the bite on Sorrowful for a sawbuck, and by the time Sorrowful gets through explaining how things are with him, Regret feels so sorry for him that he goes out and puts the bite on somebody else for the saw and gives it to Sorrowful, although it is well known to one and all that Sorrowful has plenty of potatoes hid away somewhere.

He is a tall, skinny guy with a long, sad, mean-looking kisser, and a mournful voice. He is maybe sixty years old, give or take a couple of years, and for as long as I can remember he is running a handbook over in Forty-ninth Street next door to a chop-suey joint. In fact, Sorrowful is one of the largest handbook makers in this town.

Any time you see him he is generally by himself, because being by himself is not apt to cost him anything, and it is

therefore a most surprising scene when he comes along Broadway with a little doll.

And there is much speculation among the citizens as to how this comes about, for no one ever hears of Sorrowful having any family, or relations of any kind, or even any friends.

The little doll is a very little doll indeed, the top of her noggin only coming up to Sorrowful's knee, although of course Sorrowful has very high knees, at that. Moreover, she is a very pretty little doll, with big blue eyes and fat pink cheeks, and a lot of yellow curls hanging down her back, and she has fat little legs and quite a large smile, although Sorrowful is lugging her along the street so fast that half the time her feet are dragging the sidewalk and she has a licence to be bawling instead of smiling.

Sorrowful is looking sadder than somewhat, which makes his face practically heart-rending, so he pulls up in front of Mindy's and motions us to follow him in. Anybody can see that he is worried about something very serious, and many citizens are figuring that maybe he suddenly discovers all his potatoes are counterfeit, because nobody can think of anything that will worry Sorrowful except money.

Anyway, four or five of us gather around the table where Sorrowful sits down with the little doll beside him, and he states a most surprising situation to us.

It seems that early in the afternoon a young guy who is playing the races with Sorrowful for several days pops into his place of business next door to the chop-suey joint, leading the little doll, and this guy wishes to know how much time he has before post in the first race at Empire.

Well, he only has about twenty-five minutes, and he seems very down-hearted about this, because he explains to Sorrowful that he has a sure thing in this race, which he gets the night before off a guy who is a pal of a close friend of Jockey Workman's valet.

The young guy says he is figuring to bet himself about a deuce on this sure thing, but he does not have such a sum as a deuce on him when he goes to bed, so he plans to get up bright and early in the morning and hop down to a spot on Fourteenth Street where he knows a guy who will let him have the deuce.

But it seems he oversleeps, and here it is almost post time, and it is too late for him to get to Fourteenth Street and back before the race is run off, and it is all quite a sad story indeed, although of course it does not make much impression on Sorrowful, as he is already sadder than somewhat himself just from thinking that somebody may beat him for a bet during the day, even though the races do not start anywhere as yet.

Well, the young guy tells Sorrowful he is going to try to get to Fourteenth Street and back in time to bet on the sure thing, because he says it will be nothing short of a crime if he has to miss such a wonderful opportunity.

‘But,’ he says to Sorrowful, ‘to make sure I do not miss, you take my marker for a deuce, and I will leave the kid here with you as security until I get back.’

Now, ordinarily, asking Sorrowful to take a marker will be considered great foolishness, as it is well known to one and all that Sorrowful will not take a marker from Andrew Mellon. In fact, Sorrowful can almost break your heart telling you about the poorhouses that are full of bookmakers who take markers in their time.

But it happens that business is just opening up for the day, and Sorrowful is pretty busy, and besides the young guy is a steady customer for several days, and has an honest pan, and Sorrowful figures a guy is bound to take a little doll out of hock for a deuce. Furthermore, while Sorrowful does not know much about kids, he can see the little doll must be worth a deuce, at least, and maybe more.

So he nods his head, and the young guy puts the little doll on a chair and goes tearing out of the joint to get the dough,

while Sorrowful marks down a deuce bet on Cold Cuts, which is the name of the sure thing. Then he forgets all about the proposition for a while, and all the time the little doll is sitting on the chair as quiet as a mouse, smiling at Sorrowful's customers, including the Chinks from the chop-suey joint who come in now and then to play the races.

Well, Cold Cuts blows, and in fact is not even fifth, and along late in the afternoon Sorrowful suddenly realizes that the young guy never shows up again, and that the little doll is still sitting in the chair, although she is now playing with a butcher knife which one of the Chinks from the chop-suey joint gives her to keep her amused.

Finally it comes on Sorrowful's closing time, and the little doll is still there, so he can think of nothing else to do in this situation, but to bring her around to Mindy's and get a little advice from different citizens, as he does not care to leave her in his place of business alone, as Sorrowful will not trust anybody in there alone, not even himself.

'Now,' Sorrowful says, after giving us this long spiel, 'what are we to do about this proposition?'

Well, of course, up to this minute none of the rest of us know we are being cut in on any proposition, and personally I do not care for any part of it, but Big Nig, the crap shooter, speaks up as follows:

'If this little doll is sitting in your joint all afternoon,' Nig says, 'the best thing to do right now is to throw a feed into her, as the chances are her stomach thinks her throat is cut.'

Now this seems to be a fair sort of an idea, so Sorrowful orders up a couple of portions of ham hocks and sauerkraut, which is a very tasty dish in Mindy's at all times, and the little doll tears into it very enthusiastically, using both hands, although a fat old doll who is sitting at the next table speaks up and says this is terrible fodder to be tossing into a child at such an hour, and where is her mamma?

'Well,' Big Nig says to the old doll, 'I hear of many people

getting a bust in the snoot for not minding their own business in this town, but you give off an idea, at that. Listen,' Big Nig says to the little doll, 'where is your mamma?'

But the little doll does not seem to know, or maybe she does not wish to make this information public, because she only shakes her head and smiles at Big Nig, as her mouth is too full of ham hocks and sauerkraut for her to talk.

'What is your name?' Big Nig asks, and she says something that Big Nig claims sounds like Marky, although personally I think she is trying to say Martha. Anyway it is from this that she gets the name we always call her afterward, which is Marky.

'It is a good monicker,' Big Nig says. 'It is short for marker, and she is certainly a marker unless Sorrowful is telling us a large lie. Why,' Big Nig says, 'this is a very cute little doll, at that, and pretty smart. How old are you, Marky?'

She only shakes her head again, so Regret, the horse player, who claims he can tell how old a horse is by its teeth, reaches over and sticks his finger in her mouth to get a peek at her crockery, but she seems to think Regret's finger is a hunk of ham hock and shuts down on it so hard Regret lets out an awful squawk. But he says that before she tries to cripple him for life he sees enough of her teeth to convince him she is maybe three, rising four, and this seems reasonable, at that. Anyway, she cannot be much older.

Well, about this time a guinea with a hand organ stops out in front of Mindy's and begins grinding out a tune while his ever-loving wife is passing a tambourine around among the citizens on the sidewalk and, on hearing this music, Marky slides off of her chair with her mouth still full of ham hock and sauerkraut, which she swallows so fast she almost chokes, and then she speaks as follows:

'Marky dance,' she says.

Then she begins hopping and skipping around among the tables, holding her little short skirt up in her hands and

showing a pair of white panties underneath. Pretty soon Mindy himself comes along and starts putting up a beef about making a dance hall of his joint, but a guy by the name of Sleep-out, who is watching Marky with much interest, offers to bounce a sugar bowl off of Mindy's sconce if he does not mind his own business.

So Mindy goes away, but he keeps muttering about the white panties being a most immodest spectacle, which of course is great nonsense, as many dolls older than Marky are known to do dances in Mindy's, especially on the late watch, when they stop by for a snack on their way home from the night clubs and the speaks, and I hear some of them do not always wear white panties, either.

Personally, I like Marky's dancing very much, although of course she is no Pavlova, and finally she trips over her own feet and falls on her snoot. But she gets up smiling and climbs back on her chair and pretty soon she is sound asleep with her head against Sorrowful.

Well, now there is much discussion about what Sorrowful ought to do with her. Some claim he ought to take her to a police station, and others say the best thing to do is to put an ad. in the Lost and Found columns of the morning bladders, the same as people do when they find Angora cats, and Pekes, and other animals which they do not wish to keep, but none of these ideas seems to appeal to Sorrowful.

Finally he says he will take her to his own home and let her sleep there while he is deciding what is to be done about her, so Sorrowful takes Marky in his arms and lugs her over to a fleabag in West Forty-ninth Street where he has a room for many years, and afterward a bell hop tells me Sorrowful sits up all night watching her while she is sleeping.

Now what happens but Sorrowful takes on a great fondness for the little doll, which is most surprising, as Sorrowful is never before fond of anybody or anything, and after he has her overnight he cannot bear the idea of giving her

up.

Personally, I will just as soon have a three-year-old baby wolf around me as a little doll such as this, but Sorrowful thinks she is the greatest thing that ever happens. He has a few inquiries made around and about to see if he can find out who she belongs to, and he is tickled silly when nothing comes of these inquiries, although nobody else figures anything will come of them anyway, as it is by no means uncommon in this town for little kids to be left sitting in little chairs, or on doorsteps, to be chucked into orphan asylums by whoever finds them.

Anyway, Sorrowful says he is going to keep Marky, and his attitude causes great surprise, as keeping Marky is bound to be an expense, and it does not seem reasonable that Sorrowful will go to any expense for anything. When it commences to look as if he means what he says, many citizens naturally figure there must be an angle, and soon there are a great many rumours on the subject.

Of course one of these rumours is that the chances are Marky is Sorrowful's own offspring which is tossed back on him by the wronged mamma, but this rumour is started by a guy who does not know Sorrowful, and after he gets a gander at Sorrowful, the guy apologizes, saying he realizes that no wronged mamma will be daffy enough to permit herself to be wronged by Sorrowful. Personally, I always say that if Sorrowful wishes to keep Marky it is his own business, and most of the citizens around Mindy's agree with me.

But the trouble is Sorrowful at once cuts everybody else in on the management of Marky, and the way he talks to the citizens around Mindy's about her, you will think we are all personally responsible for her. As most of the citizens around Mindy's are bachelors, or are wishing they are bachelors, it is most inconvenient to them to suddenly find themselves with a family.

Some of us try to explain to Sorrowful that if he is going to

keep Marky it is up to him to handle all her play, but right away Sorrowful starts talking so sad about all his pals deserting him and Marky just when they need them most that it softens all hearts, although up to this time we are about as pally with Sorrowful as a burglar with a copper. Finally every night in Mindy's is meeting night for a committee to decide something or other about Marky.

The first thing we decide is that the fleabag where Sorrowful lives is no place for Marky, so Sorrowful hires a big apartment in one of the swellest joints on West Fifty-ninth Street, overlooking Central Park, and spends plenty of potatoes furnishing it, although up to this time Sorrowful never sets himself back more than about ten bobs per week for a place to live and considers it extravagance, at that. I hear it costs him five G's to fix up Marky's bedroom alone, not counting the solid gold toilet set that he buys for her. Then he gets her an automobile and he has to hire a guy to drive it for her, and finally when we explain to Sorrowful that it does not look right for Marky to be living with nobody but him and a chauffeur, Sorrowful hires a French doll with bobbed hair and red cheeks by the name of Mam'selle Fifi as a nurse for Marky, and this seems to be quite a sensible move, as it insures Marky plenty of company.

In fact, up to the time that Sorrowful hires Mam'selle Fifi, many citizens are commencing to consider Marky something of a nuisance and are playing the duck for her and Sorrowful, but after Mam'selle Fifi comes along you can scarcely get in Sorrowful's joint on Fifty-ninth Street, or around his table in Mindy's when he brings Marky and Mam'selle Fifi in to eat. But one night Sorrowful goes home early and catches Sleep-out guzzling Mam'selle Fifi, and Sorrowful makes Mam'selle Fifi take plenty of breeze, claiming she will set a bad example to Marky.

Then he gets an old tomato by the name of Mrs. Clancy to be Marky's nurse, and while there is no doubt Mrs. Clancy is a

better nurse than Mam'selle Fifi and there is practically no danger of her setting Marky a bad example, the play at Sorrowful's joint is by no means as brisk as formerly.

You can see that from being closer than a dead heat with his potatoes, Sorrowful becomes as loose as ashes. He not only spends plenty on Marky, but he starts picking up checks in Mindy's and other spots, although up to this time picking up checks is something that is most repulsive to Sorrowful.

He gets so he will hold still for a bite, if the bite is not too savage and, what is more, a great change comes over his kisser. It is no longer so sad and mean looking, and in fact it is almost a pleasant sight at times, especially as Sorrowful gets so he smiles now and then, and has a big hello for one and all, and everybody says the Mayor ought to give Marky a medal for bringing about such a wonderful change.

Now Sorrowful is so fond of Marky that he wants her with him all the time, and by and by there is much criticism of him for having her around his handbook joint among the Chinks and the horse players, and especially the horse players, and for taking her around night clubs and keeping her out at all hours, as some people do not consider this a proper bringing-up for a little doll.

We hold a meeting in Mindy's on this proposition one night, and we get Sorrowful to agree to keep Marky out of his joint, but we know Marky is so fond of night clubs, especially where there is music, that it seems a sin and a shame to deprive her of this pleasure altogether, so we finally compromise by letting Sorrowful take her out one night a week to the Hot Box in Fifty-fourth Street, which is only a few blocks from where Marky lives, and Sorrowful can get her home fairly early. In fact, after this Sorrowful seldom keeps her out any later than 2 a.m.

The reason Marky likes night clubs where there is music is because she can do her dance there, as Marky is practically daffy on the subject of dancing, especially by herself, even

though she never seems to be able to get over winding up by falling on her snoot, which many citizens consider a very artistic finish, at that.

The Choo-Choo Boys' band in the Hot Box always play a special number for Marky in between the regular dances, and she gets plenty of applause, especially from the Broadway citizens who know her, although Henri, the manager of the Hot Box, once tells me he will just as soon Marky does not do her dancing there, because one night several of his best customers from Park Avenue, including two millionaires and two old dolls, who do not understand Marky's dancing, bust out laughing when she falls on her snoot, and Big Nig puts the slug on the guys, and is trying to put the slug on the old dolls, too, when he is finally headed off.

Now one cold, snowy night, many citizens are sitting around the tables in the Hot Box, speaking of one thing and another and having a few drams, when Sorrowful drops in on his way home, for Sorrowful has now become a guy who is around and about, and in and out. He does not have Marky with him, as it is not her night out and she is home with Mrs. Clancy.

A few minutes after Sorrowful arrives, a party by the name of Milk Ear Willie from the West Side comes in, this Milk Ear Willie being a party who is once a prize fighter and who has a milk ear, which is the reason he is called Milk Ear Willie, and who is known to carry a John Roscoe in his pants pocket. Furthermore, it is well known that he knocks off several guys in his time, so he is considered rather a suspicious character.

It seems that the reason he comes into the Hot Box is to shoot Sorrowful full of little holes, because he has a dispute with Sorrowful about a parlay on the races the day before, and the chances are Sorrowful will now be very dead if it does not happen that, just as Milk Ear outs with the old equalizer and starts taking dead aim at Sorrowful from a table across the room, who pops into the joint but Marky.

She is in a long nightgown that keeps getting tangled up in her bare feet as she runs across the dance floor and jumps into Sorrowful's arms, so if Milk Ear Willie lets go at this time he is apt to put a slug in Marky, and this is by no means Willie's intention. So Willie puts his rod back in his kick, but he is greatly disgusted and stops as he is going out and makes a large complaint to Henri about allowing children in a night club.

Well, Sorrowful does not learn until afterward how Marky saves his life, as he is too much horrified over her coming four or five blocks through the snow bare-footed to think of anything else, and everybody present is also horrified and wondering how Marky finds her way there. But Marky does not seem to have any good explanation for her conduct, except that she wakes up and discovers Mrs. Clancy asleep and gets to feeling lonesome for Sorrowful.

About this time, the Choo-Choo Boys start playing Marky's tune, and she slips out of Sorrowful's arms and runs out on the dance floor.

'Marky dance,' she says.

Then she lifts her nightgown in her hands and starts hopping and skipping about the floor until Sorrowful collects her in his arms again, and wraps her in an overcoat and takes her home.

Now what happens but the next day Marky is sick from being out in the snow bare-footed and with nothing on but her nightgown, and by night she is very sick indeed, and it seems that she has pneumonia, so Sorrowful takes her to the Clinic hospital, and hires two nurses and two croakers, and wishes to hire more, only they tell him these will do for the present.

The next day Marky is no better, and the next night she is worse, and the management of the Clinic is very much upset because it has no place to put the baskets of fruit and candy and floral horseshoes and crates of dolls and toys that keep arriving every few minutes. Furthermore, the management by

no means approves of the citizens who are tiptoeing along the hall on the floor where Marky has her room, especially such as Big Nig, and Sleep-out, and Wop Joey, and the Pale Face Kid and Guinea Mike and many other prominent characters, especially as these characters keep trying to date up the nurses.

Of course I can see the management's point of view, but I wish to say that no visitor to the Clinic ever brings more joy and cheer to the patients than Sleep-out, as he goes calling in all the private rooms and wards to say a pleasant word or two to the inmates, and I never take any stock in the rumour that he is looking around to see if there is anything worth picking up. In fact, an old doll from Rockville Centre, who is suffering with yellow jaundice, puts up an awful holler when Sleep-out is heaved from her room, because she says he is right in the middle of a story about a travelling salesman and she wishes to learn what happens.

There are so many prominent characters in and around the Clinic that the morning bladders finally get the idea that some well-known mob guy must be in the hospital full of slugs, and by and by the reporters come buzzing around to see what is what. Naturally they find out that all this interest is in nothing but a little doll, and while you will naturally think that such a little doll as Marky can scarcely be worth the attention of the reporters, it seems they get more heated up over her when they hear the story than if she is Jack Diamond.

In fact, the next day all the bladders have large stories about Marky, and also about Sorrowful and about how all these prominent characters of Broadway are hanging around the Clinic on her account. Moreover, one story tells about Sleep-out entertaining the other patients in the hospital, and it makes Sleep-out sound like a very large-hearted guy.

It is maybe three o'clock on the morning of the fourth day Marky is in the hospital that Sorrowful comes into Mindy's looking very sad, indeed. He orders a sturgeon sandwich on pumpernickel, and then he explains that Marky seems to be

getting worse by the minute and that he does not think his doctors are doing her any good, and at this Big Nig, the crap shooter, speaks up and states as follows:

‘Well,’ Big Nig says, ‘if we are only able to get Doc Beerfeldt, the great pneumonia specialist, the chances are he will cure Marky like breaking sticks. But of course,’ Nig says, ‘it is impossible to get Doc Beerfeldt unless you are somebody like John D. Rockefeller, or maybe the President.’

Naturally, everybody knows that what Big Nig says is very true, for Doc Beerfeldt is the biggest croaker in this town, but no ordinary guy can get close enough to Doc Beerfeldt to hand him a ripe peach, let alone get him to go out on a case. He is an old guy, and he does not practise much any more, and then only among a few very rich and influential people. Furthermore, he has plenty of potatoes himself, so money does not interest him whatever, and anyway it is great foolishness to be talking of getting Doc Beerfeldt out at such an hour as this.

‘Who do we know who knows Doc Beerfeldt?’ Sorrowful says. ‘Who can we call up who may have influence enough with him to get him to just look at Marky? I will pay any price,’ he says. ‘Think of somebody,’ he says.

Well, while we are all trying to think, who comes in but Milk Ear Willie, and he comes in to toss a few slugs at Sorrowful, but before Milk Ear can start blasting Sleep-out sees him and jumps up and takes him off to a corner table, and starts Whispering in Milk Ear’s good ear.

As Sleep-out talks to him Milk Ear looks at Sorrowful in great surprise, and finally he begins nodding his head, and by and by he gets up and goes out of the joint in a hurry, while Sleep-out comes back to our table and says like this:

‘Well,’ Sleep-out says, ‘let us stroll over to the Clinic. I just send Milk Ear Willie up to Doc Beerfeldt’s house on Park Avenue to get the old Doc and bring him to the hospital. But, Sorrowful,’ Sleep-out says, ‘if he gets him, you must pay Willie the parlay you dispute with him, whatever it is. The chances

are,' Sleep-out says, 'Willie is right. I remember once you out-argue me on a parlay when I know I am right.'

Personally, I consider Sleep-out's talk about sending Milk Ear Willie after Doc Beerfeldt just so much nonsense, and so does everybody else, but we figure maybe Sleep-out is trying to raise Sorrowful's hopes, and anyway he keeps Milk Ear from tossing these slugs at Sorrowful, which everybody considers very thoughtful of Sleep-out, at least, especially as Sorrowful is under too great a strain to be dodging slugs just now.

About a dozen of us walk over to the Clinic, and most of us stand around the lobby on the ground floor, although Sorrowful goes up to Marky's floor to wait outside her door. He is waiting there from the time she is first taken to the hospital, never leaving except to go over to Mindy's once in a while to get something to eat, and occasionally they open the door a little to let him get a peek at Marky.

Well, it is maybe six o'clock when we hear a taxi stop outside the hospital and pretty soon in comes Milk Ear Willie with another character from the West Side by the name of Fats Finstein, who is well known to one and all as a great friend of Willie's, and in between them they have a little old guy with a Vandyke beard, who does not seem to have on anything much but a silk dressing-gown and who seems somewhat agitated, especially as Milk Ear Willie and Fats Finstein keep prodding him from behind.

Now it comes out that this little old guy is nobody but Doc Beerfeldt, the great pneumonia specialist, and personally I never see a madder guy, although I wish to say I never-blame him much for being mad when I learn how Milk Ear Willie and Fats Finstein boff his butler over the noggin when he answers their ring, and how they walk right into old Doc Beerfeldt's bedroom and haul him out of the hay at the point of their Roscoes and make him go with them.

In fact, I consider such treatment most discourteous to a prominent croaker, and if I am Doc Beerfeldt I will start

hollering copper as soon as I hit the hospital, and for all I know maybe Doc Beerfeldt has just such an idea, but as Milk Ear Willie and Fats Finstein haul him into the lobby who comes downstairs but Sorrowful. And the minute Sorrowful sees Doc Beerfeldt he rushes up to him and says like this:

‘Oh Doc,’ Sorrowful says, ‘do something for my little girl. She is dying, Doc,’ Sorrowful says. ‘Just a little bit of a girl, Doc. Her name is Marky. I am only a gambler, Doc, and I do not mean anything to you or to anybody else, but please save the little girl.’

Well, old Doc Beerfeldt sticks out his Vandyke beard and looks at Sorrowful a minute, and he can see there are large tears in old Sorrowful’s eyes, and for all I know maybe the Doc knows it has been many and many a year since there are tears in these eyes, at that. Then the Doc looks at Milk Ear Willie and Fats Finstein and the rest of us, and at the nurses and internes who are commencing to come running up from every which way. Finally, he speaks as follows:

‘What is this?’ he says. ‘A child? A little child? Why,’ he says, ‘I am under the impression that these gorillas are kidnapping me to attend to some other sick or wounded gorilla. A child? This is quite different. Why do you not say so in the first place? Where is the child?’ Doc Beerfeldt says, ‘and,’ he says, ‘somebody get me some pants.’

We all follow him upstairs to the door of Marky’s room and we wait outside when he goes in, and we wait there for hours, because it seems that even old Doc Beerfeldt cannot think of anything to do in this situation no matter how he tries. And along toward ten-thirty in the morning he opens the door very quietly and motions Sorrowful to come in, and then he motions all the rest of us to follow, shaking his head very sad.

There are so many of us that we fill the room around a little high narrow bed on which Marky is lying like a flower against a white wall, her yellow curls spread out over her

pillow. Old Sorrowful drops on his knees beside the bed and his shoulders heave quite some as he kneels there, and I hear Sleep-out sniffing as if he has a cold in his head. Marky seems to be asleep when we go in, but while we are standing around the bed looking down at her, she opens her eyes and seems to see us and, what is more, she seems to know us, because she smiles at each guy in turn and then tries to hold out one of her little hands to Sorrowful.

Now very faint, like from far away, comes a sound of music through a half-open window in the room, from a jazz band that is rehearsing in a hall just up the street from the hospital, and Marky hears this music because she holds her head in such a way that anybody can see she is listening, and then she smiles again at us and whispers very plain, as follows:

‘Marky dance.’

And she tries to reach down as if to pick up her skirt as she always does when she dances, but her hands fall across her breast as soft and white and light as snowflakes, and Marky never again dances in this world.

Well, old Doc Beerfeldt and the nurses make us go outside at once, and while we are standing there in the hall outside the door, saying nothing whatever, a young guy and two dolls, one of them old, and the other not so old, come along the hall much excited. The young guy seems to know Sorrowful, who is sitting down again in his chair just outside the door, because he rushes up to Sorrowful and says to him like this:

‘Where is she?’ he says. ‘Where is my darling child? You remember me?’ he says. ‘I leave my little girl with you one day while I go on an errand, and while I am on this errand everything goes blank, and I wind up back in my home in Indianapolis with my mother and sister here, and recall nothing about where I leave my child, or anything else.’

‘The poor boy has amnesia,’ the old doll says. ‘The stories that he deliberately abandons his wife in Paris and his child in

New York are untrue.'

'Yes,' the doll who is not old puts in. 'If we do not see the stories in the newspapers about how you have the child in this hospital we may never learn where she is. But everything is all right now. Of course we never approve of Harold's marriage to a person of the stage, and we only recently learn of her death in Paris soon after their separation there and are very sorry. But everything is all right now. We will take full charge of the child.'

Now while all this gab is going on, Sorrowful never glances at them. He is just sitting there looking at Marky's door. And now as he is looking at the door a very strange thing seems to happen to his kisser, for all of a sudden it becomes the sad, mean-looking kisser that it is in the days before he ever sees Marky, and furthermore it is never again anything else.

'We will be rich,' the young guy says. 'We just learn that my darling child will be sole heiress to her maternal grand papa's fortune, and the old guy is only a hop ahead of the undertaker right now. I suppose,' he says, 'I owe you something?'

And then Sorrowful gets up off his chair, and looks at the young guy and at the two dolls, and speaks as follows:

'Yes,' he says, 'you owe me a two-dollar marker for the bet you blow on Cold Cuts, and,' he says, 'I will trouble you to send it to me at once, so I can wipe you off my books.'

Now he walks down the hall and out of the hospital, never looking back again, and there is a very great silence behind him that is broken only by the sniffing of Sleep-out, and by some first-class sobbing from some of the rest of us, and I remember now that the guy who is doing the best job of sobbing of all is nobody but Milk Ear Willie.

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The Lemon Drop Kid

I am going to take you back a matter of four or five years ago to an August afternoon and the race track at Saratoga, which is a spot in New York state very pleasant to behold, and also to a young guy by the name of The Lemon Drop Kid, who is called The Lemon Drop Kid because he always has a little sack of lemon drops in the side pocket of his coat, and is always munching at same, a lemon drop being a breed of candy that is relished by many, although personally I prefer peppermints.

On this day I am talking about, The Lemon Drop Kid is looking about for business, and not doing so good for himself, at that, as The Lemon Drop Kid's business is telling the tale, and he is finding it very difficult indeed to discover citizens who are willing to listen to him tell the tale.

And of course if a guy whose business is telling the tale cannot find anybody to listen to him, he is greatly handicapped, for the tale such a guy tells is always about how he knows something is doing in a certain race, the idea of the tale being that it may cause the citizen who is listening to it to make a wager on this certain race, and if the race comes out the way the guy who is telling the tale says it will come out, naturally the citizen is bound to be very grateful to the guy, and maybe reward him liberally.

Furthermore, the citizen is bound to listen to more tales, and a guy whose business is telling the tale, such as The Lemon Drop Kid, always has tales to tell until the cows come home, and generally they are long tales, and sometimes they are very interesting and entertaining, according to who is telling them, and it is well known to one and all that nobody

can tell the tale any better than The Lemon Drop Kid.

But old Cap Duhaine and his sleuths at the Saratoga track are greatly opposed to guys going around telling the tale, and claim that such guys are nothing but touts, and they are especially opposed to The Lemon Drop Kid, because they say he tells the tale so well that he weakens public confidence in horse racing. So they are casing The Lemon Drop Kid pretty close to see that he does not get some citizen's ear and start telling him the tale, and finally The Lemon Drop Kid is greatly disgusted and walks up the lawn towards the head of the stretch.

And while he is walking, he is eating lemon drops out of his pocket, and thinking about how much better off he will be if he puts in the last ten years of his life at some legitimate dodge, instead of hop-scotching from one end of the country to the other telling the tale, although just off-hand The Lemon Drop Kid cannot think of any legitimate dodge at which he will see as much of life as he sees around the race tracks since he gets out of the orphan asylum in Jersey City where he is raised.

At the time this story starts out, The Lemon Drop Kid is maybe twenty-four years old, and he is a quiet little guy with a low voice, which comes of keeping it confidential when he is telling the tale, and he is nearly always alone. In fact, The Lemon Drop Kid is never known to have a pal as long as he is around telling the tale, although he is by no means an unfriendly guy, and is always speaking to everybody, even when he is in the money.

But it is now a long time since The Lemon Drop Kid is in the money, or seems to have any chance of being in the money, and the landlady of the boarding-house in Saratoga where he is residing is becoming quite hostile, and making derogatory cracks about him, and also about most of her other boarders, too, so The Lemon Drop Kid is unable to really enjoy his meals there, especially as they are very bad meals to start with.

Well, The Lemon Drop Kid goes off by himself up the lawn and stands there looking out across the track, munching a lemon drop from time to time, and thinking what a harsh old world it is, to be sure, and how much better off it will be if there are no sleuths whatever around and about.

It is a day when not many citizens are present at the track, and the only one near The Lemon Drop Kid seems to be an old guy in a wheel chair, with a steamer rug over his knees, and a big, sleepy-looking stove lid who appears to be in charge of the chair.

This old guy has a big white mouser, and big white bristly eyebrows, and he is a very fierce-looking old guy, indeed, and anybody can tell at once that he is nothing but a curmudgeon, and by no means worthy of attention. But he is a familiar spectacle at the race track at Saratoga, as he comes out nearly every day in a limousine the size of a hearse, and is rolled out of the limousine in his wheel chair on a little runway by the stove lid, and pushed up to this spot where he is sitting now, so he can view the sport of kings without being bothered by the crowds.

It is well known to one and all that his name is Rarus P. Griggsby, and that he has plenty of potatoes, which he makes in Wall Street, and that he is closer than the next second with his potatoes, and furthermore, it is also well known that he hates everybody in the world, including himself, so nobody goes anywhere near him if they can help it.

The Lemon Drop Kid does not realize he is standing so close to Rarus P. Griggsby, until he hears the old guy growling at the stove lid, and then The Lemon Drop Kid looks at Rarus P. Griggsby very sympathetic and speaks to him in his low voice as follows:

‘Gout?’ he says.

Now of course The Lemon Drop Kid knows who Rarus P. Griggsby is, and under ordinary circumstances The Lemon Drop Kid will not think of speaking to such a character, but

afterwards he explains that he is feeling so despondent that he addresses Rarus P. Griggsby just to show he does not care what happens. And under ordinary circumstances, the chances are Rarus P. Griggsby will start hollering for the gendarmes if a stranger has the gall to speak to him, but there is so much sympathy in The Lemon Drop Kid's voice and eyes, that Rarus P. Griggsby seems to be taken by surprise, and he answers like this:

'Arthritis,' Rarus P. Griggsby says. 'In my knees,' he says. 'I am not able to walk a step in three years.'

'Why,' The Lemon Drop Kid says, 'I am greatly distressed to hear this. I know just how you feel, because I am troubled from infancy with this same disease.'

Now of course this is strictly the old ackamarackus, as The Lemon Drop Kid cannot even spell arthritis, let alone have it, but he makes the above statement just by way of conversation; and furthermore he goes on to state as follows:

'In fact,' The Lemon Drop Kid says, 'I suffer so I can scarcely think, but one day I find a little remedy that fixes me up as right as rain, and I now have no trouble whatsoever.'

And with this, he takes a lemon drop out of his pocket and pops it into his mouth, and then he hands one to Rarus P. Griggsby in a most hospitable manner, and the old guy holds the lemon drop between his thumb and forefinger and looks at it as if he expects it to explode right in his pan, while the stove lid gazes at The Lemon Drop Kid with a threatening expression.

'Well,' Rarus P. Griggsby says, 'personally I consider all cures fakes. I have a standing offer of five thousand dollars to anybody that can cure me of my pain, and nobody even comes close so far. Doctors are also fakes,' he says. 'I have seven of them, and they take out my tonsils, and all my teeth, and my appendix, and they keep me from eating anything I enjoy, and I only get worse. The waters here in Saratoga seem to help me some, but,' he says, 'they do not get me out of this wheel chair, and I am sick and tired of it all.'

Then, as if he comes to a quick decision, he pops the lemon drop into his mouth, and begins munching it very slow, and after a while he says it tastes just like a lemon drop to him, and of course it is a lemon drop all along, but The Lemon Drop Kid says this taste is only to disguise the medicine in it.

Now, by and by, The Lemon Drop Kid commences telling Rarus P. Griggsby the tale, and afterwards The Lemon Drop Kid says he has no idea Rarus P. Griggsby will listen to the tale, and that he only starts telling it to him in a spirit of good clean fun, just to see how he will take it, and he is greatly surprised to note that Rarus P. Griggsby is all attention.

Personally, I find nothing unusual in this situation, because I often see citizens around the race tracks as prominent as Rarus P. Griggsby, listening to the tale from guys who do not have as much as a seat in their pants, especially if the tale has any larceny in it, because it is only human nature to be deeply interested in larceny.

And the tale The Lemon Drop Kid tells Rarus P. Griggsby is that he is a brother of Sonny Saunders, the jock, and that Sonny tells him to be sure and be at the track this day to bet on a certain horse in the fifth race, because it is nothing but a boat race, and everything in it is as stiff as a plank, except this certain horse.

Now of course this is all a terrible lie, and The Lemon Drop Kid is taking a great liberty with Sonny Saunders's name, especially as Sonny does not have any brothers, anyway, and even if Sonny knows about a boat race the chances are he will never tell The Lemon Drop Kid, but then very few guys whose business is telling the tale ever stop to figure they may be committing perjury.

So The Lemon Drop Kid goes on to state that when he arrives at the track he has fifty bobs pinned to his wishbone to bet on this certain horse, but unfortunately he gets a tip on a real good thing in the very first race, and bets his fifty bobs right then and there, figuring to provide himself with a larger

taw to bet on the certain horse in the fifth, but the real good thing receives practically a criminal ride from a jock who does not know one end of a horse from the other, and is beat a very dirty snoot, and there The Lemon Drop Kid is with the fifth race coming up, and an absolute cinch in it, the way his tale goes, but with no dough left to bet on it.

Well, personally I do not consider this tale as artistic as some The Lemon Drop Kid tells, and in fact The Lemon Drop Kid himself never rates it among his masterpieces, but old Rarus P. Griggsby listens to the tale quite intently without saying a word, and all the time he is munching the lemon drop and smacking his lips under his big white mouser, as if he greatly enjoys this delicacy, but when The Lemon Drop Kid concludes the tale, and is standing there gazing out across the track with a very sad expression on his face, Rarus P. Griggsby speaks as follows:

‘I never bet on horse races,’ Rarus P. Griggsby says. ‘They are too uncertain. But this proposition you present sounds like finding money, and I love to find money. I will wager one hundred dollars on your assurance that this certain horse cannot miss.’

And with this, he outs with a leather so old that The Lemon Drop Kid half expects a cockroach to leap out at him, and produces a C note which he hands to The Lemon Drop Kid, and as he does so, Rarus P. Griggsby inquires:

‘What is the name of this certain horse?’

Well, of course this is a fair question, but it happens that The Lemon Drop Kid is so busy all afternoon thinking of the injustice of the sleuths that he never even bothers to look up this particular race beforehand, and afterwards he is quite generally criticised for slovenliness in this matter, for if a guy is around telling the tale about a race, he is entitled to pick out a horse that has at least some kind of a chance.

But of course The Lemon Drop Kid is not expecting the opportunity of telling the tale to arise, so the question finds

him unprepared, as off-hand he cannot think of the name of a horse in the race, as he never consults the scratches, and he does not wish to mention the name of some plug that may be scratched out, and lose the chance to make the C note. So as he seizes the C note from Rarus P. Griggsby and turns to dash for the bookmakers over in front of the grandstand, all The Lemon Drop Kid can think of to say at this moment is the following:

‘Watch Number Two,’ he says.

And the reason he says No. 2, is he figures there is bound to be a No. 2 in the race, while he cannot be so sure about a No. 7 or a No. 9 until he looks them over, because you understand that all The Lemon Drop Kid states in telling the tale to Rarus P. Griggsby about knowing of something doing in this race is very false.

And of course The Lemon Drop Kid has no idea of betting the C note on anything whatever in the race. In the first place, he does not know of anything to bet on, and in the second place he needs the C note, but he is somewhat relieved when he inquires of the first bookie he comes to, and learns that No.2 is an old walrus by the name of The Democrat, and anybody knows that The Democrat has no chance of winning even in a field of mud turtles.

So The Lemon Drop Kid puts the C note in his pants pocket, and walks around and about until the horses are going to the post, and you must not think there is anything dishonest in his not betting this money with a bookmaker, as The Lemon Drop Kid is only taking the bet himself, which is by no means unusual, and in fact it is so common that only guys like Cap Duhaime and his sleuths think much about it.

Finally The Lemon Drop Kid goes back to Rarus P. Griggsby, for it will be considered most ungenteel for a guy whose business is telling the tale to be absent when it comes time to explain why the tale does not stand up, and about this time the horses are turning for home, and a few seconds later they go

busting past the spot where Rarus P. Griggsby is sitting in his wheel chair, and what is in front to the wire by a Salt Lake City block but The Democrat with No.2 on his blanket.

Well, old Rarus P. Griggsby starts yelling and waving his hands, and making so much racket that he is soon the centre of attention, and when it comes out that he bets a C note on the winner, nobody blames him for cutting up these didoes, for the horse is a twenty to one shot, but all this time The Lemon Drop Kid only stands there looking very, very sad and shaking his head, until finally Rarus P. Griggsby notices his strange attitude.

‘Why are you not cheering over our winning this nice bet?’ he says. ‘Of course I expect to declare you in,’ he says. ‘In fact I am quite grateful to you.’

‘But,’ The Lemon Drop Kid says, ‘we do not win. Our horse runs a jolly second.’

‘What do you mean, second?’ Rarus P. Griggsby says. ‘Do you not tell me to watch Number Two, and does not Number Two win?’

‘Yes,’ The Lemon Drop Kid says, ‘what you state is quite true, but what I mean when I say watch Number Two is that Number Two is the only horse I am afraid of in the race, and it seems my fear is well founded.’

Now at this, old Rarus P. Griggsby sits looking at The Lemon Drop Kid for as long as you can count up to ten, if you count slow, and his mouser and eyebrows are all twitching at once, and anybody can see that he is very much perturbed, and then all of a sudden he lets out a yell and to the great amazement of one and all he leaps right out of his wheel chair and makes a lunge at The Lemon Drop Kid.

Well, there is no doubt that Rarus P. Griggsby has murder in his heart, and nobody blames The Lemon Drop Kid when he turns and starts running away at great speed, and in fact he has such speed that finally his feet are throwing back little stones off the gravel paths of the race track with such velocity

that a couple of spectators who get hit by these stones think they are shot.

For a few yards, old Rarus P. Griggsby is right at The Lemon Drop Kid's heels, and furthermore Rarus P. Griggsby is yelling and swearing in a most revolting manner. Then some of Cap Duhaine's sleuths come running up and they take after The Lemon Drop Kid too, and he has to have plenty of early foot to beat them to the race-track gates, and while Rarus P. Griggsby does not figure much in the running after the first few jumps, The Lemon Drop Kid seems to remember hearing him cry out as follows:

'Stop, there! Please stop!' Rarus P. Griggsby cries. 'I wish to see you.'

But of course The Lemon Drop Kid is by no means a chump, and he does not even slacken up, let alone stop, until he is well beyond the gates, and the sleuths are turning back, and what is more, The Lemon Drop Kid takes the road leading out of Saratoga instead of going back to the city, because he figures that Saratoga may not be so congenial to him for a while.

In fact, The Lemon Drop Kid finds himself half-regretting that he ever tells the tale to Rarus P. Griggsby as The Lemon Drop Kid likes Saratoga in August, but of course such a thing as happens to him in calling a winner the way he does is just an unfortunate accident, and is not apt to happen again in a lifetime.

Well, The Lemon Drop Kid keeps on walking away from Saratoga for quite some time, and finally he is all tuckered out and wishes to take the load off his feet. So when he comes to a small town by the name of Kibbsville, he sits down on the porch of what seems to be a general store and gas station, and while he is sitting there thinking of how nice and quiet and restful this town seems to be, with pleasant shade trees, and white houses all around and about, he sees standing in the doorway of a very little white house across the street from the

store, in a gingham dress, the most beautiful young doll that ever lives, and I know this is true, because The Lemon Drop Kid tells me so afterwards.

This doll has brown hair hanging down her back, and her smile is so wonderful that when an old pappy guy with a goatee comes out of the store to sell a guy in a flivver some gas, The Lemon Drop Kid hauls off and asks him if he can use a clerk.

Well, it seems that the old guy can, at that, because it seems that a former clerk, a guy by the name of Pilloe, recently lays down and dies on the old guy from age and malnutrition, and so this is how The Lemon Drop Kid comes to be planted in Kibbsville, and clerking in Martin Potter's store for the next couple of years, at ten bobs per week.

And furthermore, this is how The Lemon Drop Kid meets up with Miss Alicia Deering, who is nobody but the beautiful little doll that The Lemon Drop Kid sees standing in the doorway of the little house across the street.

She lives in this house with her papa, her mamma being dead a long time, and her papa is really nothing but an old bum who dearly loves his applejack, and who is generally around with a good heat on. His first name is Jonas, and he is a house painter by trade, but he seldom feels like doing any painting, as he claims he never really recovers from a terrible backache he gets when he is in the Spanish-American War with the First New York, so Miss Alicia Deering supports him by dealing them off her arm in the Commercial Hotel.

But although The Lemon Drop Kid now works for a very great old skinflint who even squawks about The Lemon Drop Kid's habit of filling his side pocket now and then with lemon drops out of a jar on the shelf in the store, The Lemon Drop Kid is very happy, for the truth of the matter is he loves Miss Alicia Deering, and it is the first time in his life he ever loves anybody, or anything. And furthermore, it is the first time in his life The Lemon Drop Kid is living quietly, and in peace, and

not losing sleep trying to think of ways of cheating somebody.

In fact, The Lemon Drop Kid now looks back on his old life with great repugnance, for he can see that it is by no means the proper life for any guy, and sometimes he has half a mind to write to his former associates who may still be around telling the tale, and request them to mend their ways, only The Lemon Drop Kid does not wish these old associates to know where he is.

He never as much as peeks at a racing sheet nowadays, and he spends all his spare time with Miss Alicia Deering, which is not so much time, at that, as old Martin Potter does not care to see his employees loafing between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10 p.m., and neither does the Commercial Hotel. But one day in the spring, when the apple blossoms are blooming in these parts, and the air is chock-a-block with perfume, and the grass is getting nice and green, The Lemon Drop Kid speaks of his love to Miss Alicia Deering, stating that it is such a love that he can scarcely eat.

Well, Miss Alicia Deering states that she reciprocates this love one hundred per cent., and then The Lemon Drop Kid suggests they get married up immediately, and she says she is in favour of the idea, only she can never think of leaving her papa, who has no one else in all this world but her, and while this is a little more extra weight than The Lemon Drop Kid figures on picking up, he says his love is so terrific he can even stand for her papa, too.

So they are married, and go to live in the little house across the street from Martin Potter's store with Miss Alicia Deering's papa. When he marries Miss Alicia Deering, The Lemon Drop Kid has a bank roll of one hundred and eighteen dollars, including the C note he takes off of Rarus P. Griggsby, and eighteen bobs that he saves out of his salary from Martin Potter in a year, and three nights after the marriage, Miss Alicia Deering's papa sniffs out where The Lemon Drop Kid plants his roll and sneezes same.

Then he goes on a big applejack toot, and spends all the dough.

But in spite of everything, including old man Deering, The Lemon Drop Kid and Miss Alicia Deering are very, very happy in the little house for about a year, especially when it seems that Miss Alicia Deering is going to have a baby, although this incident compels her to stop dealing them off the arm at the Commercial Hotel, and cuts down their resources.

Now one day, Miss Alicia Deering comes down with a great illness, and it is such an illness as causes old Doc Abernathy, the local croaker, to wag his head, and to state that it is beyond him, and that the only chance for her is to send her to a hospital in New York City where the experts can get a crack at her. But by this time, what with all his overhead, The Lemon Drop Kid is as clean as a jaybird, and he has no idea where he can get his dukes on any money in these parts, and it will cost a couple of C's, for low, to do what Doc Abernathy suggests.

Finally, The Lemon Drop Kid asks old Martin Potter if he can see his way clear to making him an advance on his salary, which still remains ten bobs per week, but Martin Potter laughs, and says he not only cannot see his way clear to doing such a thing, but that if conditions do not improve he is going to cut The Lemon Drop Kid off altogether. Furthermore, about this time the guy who owns the little house drops around and reminds The Lemon Drop Kid that he is now in arrears for two months' rent, amounting in all to twelve bobs, and if The Lemon Drop Kid is not able to meet this obligation shortly, he will have to vacate.

So one way and another The Lemon Drop Kid is in quite a quandary, and Miss Alicia Deering is getting worse by the minute, and finally The Lemon Drop Kid hoofs and hitch-hikes a matter of maybe a hundred and fifty miles to New York City, with the idea of going out to Belmont Park, where the giddy-aps are now running, figuring he may be able to make some kind of a scratch around there, but he no sooner lights on

Broadway than he runs into a guy he knows by the name of Short Boy, and this Short Boy pulls him into a doorway, and says to him like this:

‘Listen, Lemon Drop,’ Short Boy says, ‘I do not know what it is you do to old Rarus P. Griggsby, and I do not wish to know, but it must be something terrible, indeed, as he has every elbow around the race tracks laying for you for the past couple of years. You know Rarus P. Griggsby has great weight around these tracks, and you must commit murder the way he is after you. Why,’ Short Boy says, ‘only last week over in Maryland, Whitey Jordan, the track copper, asks me if ever I hear of you, and I tell him I understand you are in Australia. Keep away from the tracks,’ Short Boy says, ‘or you will wind up in the clink.’

So The Lemon Drop Kid hoofs and hitch-hikes back to Kibbsville, as he does not wish to become involved in any trouble at this time, and the night he gets back home is the same night a masked guy with a big six pistol in his duke steps into the lobby of the Commercial Hotel and sticks up the night clerk and half a dozen citizens who are sitting around in the lobby, including old Jonas Deering, and robs the damper of over sixty bobs, and it is also the same night that Miss Alicia Deering’s baby is born dead, and old Doc Abernathy afterwards claims that it is all because the experts cannot get a crack at Miss Alicia Deering a matter of about twelve hours earlier.

And it is along in the morning after this night, around four bells, that Miss Alicia Deering finally opens her eyes, and see The Lemon Drop Kid sitting beside her bed in the little house, crying very hard, and it is the first time The Lemon Drop Kid is levelling with his crying since the time one of the attendants in the orphans’ asylum in Jersey City gives him a good belting years before.

Then Miss Alicia Deering motions to The Lemon Drop Kid to bend down so she can whisper to him, and what Miss Alicia Deering whispers, soft and low, is the following:

‘Do not cry, Kid,’ she whispers. ‘Be a good boy after I am gone, Kid, and neverforget I love you, and take good care of poor papa.’

And then Miss Alicia Deering closes her eyes for good and all, and The Lemon Drop Kid sits there beside her, watching her face until some time later he hears a noise at the front door of the little house, and he opens the door to find old Sheriff Higginbotham waiting there, and after they stand looking at each other a while, the sheriff speaks as follows:

‘Well, son,’ Sheriff Higginbotham says, ‘I am sorry, but I guess you will have to come along with me. We find the vinegar barrel spigot wrapped in tin foil that you use for a gun in the back yard here where you throw it last night.’

‘All right,’ The Lemon Drop Kid says. ‘All right, Sheriff. But how do you come to think of me in the first place?’

‘Well,’ Sheriff Higginbotham says, ‘I do not suppose you recall doing it, and the only guy in the hotel lobby that notices it is nobody but your papa-in-law, Jonas Deering, but,’ he says, ‘while you are holding your home-made pistol with one hand last night, you reach into the side pocket of your coat with the other hand and take out a lemon drop and pop it into your mouth.’

I run into The Lemon Drop Kid out on the lawn at Hialeah in Miami last winter, and I am sorry to see that the twoer he does in Auburn leaves plenty of lines in his face, and a lot of grey in his hair.

But of course I do not refer to this, nor do I mention that he is the subject of considerable criticism from many citizens for turning over to Miss Alicia Deering’s papa a purse of three C’s that we raise to pay a mouthpiece for his defence.

Furthermore, I do not tell The Lemon Drop Kid that he is also criticised in some quarters for his action while in the sneezer at Auburn in sending the old guy the few bobs he is able to gather in by making and selling knick-knacks of one kind and another to visitors, until finally Jonas Deering saves

him any more bother by up and passing away of too much applejack.

The way I look at it, every guy knows his own business best, so I only duke The Lemon Drop Kid, and say I am glad to see him, and we are standing there carving up a few old scores, when all of a sudden there is a great commotion and out of the crowd around us on the lawn comes an old guy with a big white mouser, and bristly white eyebrows, and as he grabs The Lemon Drop Kid by the arm, I am somewhat surprised to see that it is nobody but old Rarus P. Griggsby, without his wheel chair, and to hear him speak as follows:

‘Well, well, well, well, well!’ Rarus P. Griggsby says to The Lemon Drop Kid. ‘At last I find you,’ he says. ‘Where are you hiding all these years? Do you not know I have detectives looking for you high and low because I wish to pay you the reward I offer for anybody curing me of my arthritis? Yes,’ Rarus P. Griggsby says, ‘the medicine you give me at Saratoga which tastes like a lemon drop, works fine, although,’ he says, ‘my seven doctors all try to tell me it is nothing but their efforts finally getting in their work, while the city of Saratoga is attempting to cut in and claim credit for its waters.

‘But,’ Rarus P. Griggsby says, ‘I know it is your medicine, and if it is not your medicine, it is your scallawaggery that makes me so hot that I forget my arthritis, and never remember it since, so it is all one and the same thing. Anyway, you now have forty-nine hundred dollars coming from me, for of course I must hold out the hundred out of which you swindle me,’ he says.

Well, The Lemon Drop Kid stands looking at Rarus P. Griggsby and listening to him, and finally The Lemon Drop Kid begins to laugh in his low voice, ha-ha-ha-ha-ha, but somehow there does not seem to be any laughter in the laugh, and I cannot bear to hear it, so I move away leaving Rarus P. Griggsby and The Lemon Drop Kid there together.

I look back only once, and I see The Lemon Drop Kid stop

laughing long enough to take a lemon drop out of the side pocket of his coat and pop it into his mouth, and then he goes on laughing, ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

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What, no Butler?

To look at Ambrose Hammer, the newspaper scribe, you will never suspect that he has sense enough to pound sand in a rat hole, but Ambrose is really a pretty slick guy. In fact, Ambrose is a great hand for thinking, and the way I find this out makes quite a story.

It begins about seven o'clock one May morning when I am standing at the corner of Fiftieth Street and Broadway, and along comes Ambrose with his neck all tied up as if he has a sore throat, and he gives me a large hello in a hoarse tone of voice.

Then we stand there together, speaking of the beautiful sunrise, and one thing and another, and of how we wish we have jobs that will let us enjoy the daylight more, although personally I do not have any job to begin with, and if there is one thing I hate and despise it is the daylight, and the chances are this goes for Ambrose, too.

In fact, in all the years I know Ambrose, I never catch him out in the daylight more than two or three times, and then it is when we are both on our way home and happen to meet up as we do this morning I am talking about. And always Ambrose is telling me what a tough life he leads, and how his nerves are all shot to pieces, although I hear the only time Ambrose's nerves really bother him is once when he goes to Florida for a vacation, and has a nervous breakdown from the quiet that is around and about those parts.

This Ambrose Hammer is a short, chubby guy, with big, round, googly eyes, and a very innocent expression, and in fact it is this innocent expression that causes many guys to put

Ambrose away as slightly dumb, because it does not seem possible that a guy who is around Broadway as long as Ambrose can look so innocent unless he is dumb.

He is what is called a dramatic critic by trade, and his job is to write pieces for the paper about the new plays that somebody is always producing on Broadway, and Ambrose's pieces are very interesting, indeed, as he loves to heave the old harpoon into actors if they do not act to suit him, and as it will take a combination of Katherine Cornell, Jimmy Durante and Lillian Gish to really suit Ambrose, he is generally in there harpooning away very good.

Well, while we are standing on the corner boosting the daylight, who comes along but a plain-clothes copper by the name of Marty Kerle, and he stops to give us a big good morning. Personally, I have no use for coppers, even if they are in plain clothes, but I believe in being courteous to them at all times, so I give Marty a big good morning right back at him, and ask him what he is doing out and about at such an hour, and Marty states as follows:

'Why,' Marty says, 'some doll who claims she is house-keeper for Mr. Justin Veezee just telephones the station that she finds Mr. Justin Veezee looking as if he is very dead in his house over here in West Fifty-sixth Street, and I am going there to investigate this rumour. Maybe,' Marty says, 'you will wish to come along with me.'

'Mr. Justin Veezee?' Ambrose Hammer says. 'Why, my goodness gracious, this cannot be true, because I hear he is in the Club Soudan only a few hours ago watching the Arabian acrobatic dancer turn flip-flops, and one thing and another, although personally,' Ambrose says, 'I do not think she is any more Arabian than Miss Ethel Barrymore.'

But of course if Mr. Justin Veezee is dead, it is a nice item of news for Ambrose Hammer to telephone in to his paper, so he tells Marty he will be delighted to go with him, for one, and I decide to go too, as I will rather be looking at a dead guy than

at guys hurrying to work at such an hour.

Furthermore, I am secretly hoping that the housekeeper does not make any mistake, as I can think of nothing nicer than seeing Mr. Justin Veezee dead, unless maybe it is two or three Mr. Justin Veezees dead, for personally I consider Mr. Justin Veezee nothing but an old stinker.

In fact, everybody in this town considers Mr. Justin Veezee nothing but an old stinker, because for many years he is along Broadway, in and out, and up and down, and always he is on the grab for young dolls such as work in night clubs and shows, and especially young dolls who do not have brains enough to realize that Mr. Justin Veezee is nothing but an old stinker. And of course there is always a fresh crop of such dolls coming to Broadway every year, and in fact it is getting so nowadays that there are several crops per year.

But although it is well known to one and all that Mr. Justin Veezee is nothing but an old stinker, nobody ever dasts speak of this matter out loud, as Mr. Justin Veezee has plenty of potatoes, which come down to him from his papa, and it is considered very disrespectful along Broadway to speak of a guy with plenty of potatoes as an old stinker, even if he is as tight with his potatoes as Mr. Justin Veezee, which is very, very, very, very tight, indeed.

Now, the house in West Fifty-sixth Street where Mr. Justin Veezee lives is between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, and is once the private home of the Veezee family when there is quite a raft of Veezees around, but it seems that these Veezees all die off one by one, except Mr. Justin Veezee, and so he finally turns the old home into an apartment house.

It is a very nice-looking building, maybe four or five stories high, with apartments on each floor, and Mr. Justin Veezee's apartment is on the first floor above the street, and takes in the whole floor, although this does not mean so much space at that, as the house is very narrow.

It is one of these apartment houses where you push a

button at the front door on the street floor, and this push rings a bell in the apartment you are after, and then somebody in the apartment pushes a button up there, and this unlocks the front door, and you walk up the stairs to where you are going, as there is no elevator, and no doorman, either.

Well, anyway, it is in the front room of Mr. Justin Veezee's apartment that we see Mr. Justin Veezee himself. He is sitting straight up in a big easy-chair beside a table on which there is a stack of these pictures called etchings, and he has on evening clothes, and his eyes are wide open and bugging out of his head, as if he is totally amazed at something he sees, and the chances are he is, at that.

There is no doubt whatever but that Mr. Justin Veezee is very dead, indeed, and Marty Kerle says we are not to touch anything until the medical examiner has a peek, although by the time he says this, Ambrose Hammer is looking the etchings over with great interest, as Ambrose is such a guy as dearly loves to look at works of art.

The housekeeper who calls up the station is present when we arrive, but she turns out to be nothing but an old tomato by the name of Mrs. Swanson, who does not live in Mr. Justin Veezee's house, but who comes every morning at an early hour to clean up the joint. And this Mrs. Swanson states that she finds Mr. Justin Veezee just as he is when she comes in on this particular morning, although she says that usually he is in the hay pounding his ear at such an hour.

She thinks maybe he falls asleep in the chair, and tries to roust him out, but as Mr. Justin Veezee does not say aye, yes, or no, she figures the chances are he is dead, and so she gives the gendarmes a buzz.

'Well,' I say to Ambrose Hammer, 'this is a most ghastly scene, indeed. In fact, Mr. Justin Veezee looks worse dead than he does alive, which I will never consider possible. The chances are this guy dies of old age. He must be fifty, if he is a day,' I say.

‘No,’ Ambrose says, ‘he does not die of old age. The way I look at it, this is a case of homicide. Somebody gets in here and cools off Mr. Justin Veezee, and it is a very dirty trick if you ask me, because,’ Ambrose says, ‘they do not give Mr. Justin Veezee a chance to change into something more comfortable than a dinner jacket.’

Well, Ambrose says he will look around and see if he can locate any clues, and while he is snooping around the joint in comes a guy from the medical examiner’s office and takes a gander at Mr. Justin Veezee. And the guy states at once that Mr. Justin Veezee is positively dead, although nobody is giving him any argument on this point, and he further states that what kills Mr. Justin Veezee is nothing but a broken neck.

Right away this broken neck becomes a very great mystery, because it does not stand to reason that a guy can break his own neck sitting down, unless maybe he is practising to be a contortionist, and nobody figures it possible that Mr. Justin Veezee is practising to be a contortionist at his age.

Furthermore, the medical guy finds certain marks on Mr. Justin Veezee’s neck which he claims show that somebody grabs Mr. Justin Veezee by the guzzle and cracks his neck for him as if he is nothing but a goose, and the medical guy says it must be somebody with very strong dukes to play such a prank on Mr. Justin Veezee.

Well, Ambrose Hammer seems to be all heated up about this whole matter, although personally I cannot see where it is any of his put-in. The way I look at it, Mr. Justin Veezee is no price any way you take him when he is alive and kicking, and his death does not change the betting any as far as I am concerned, because I know from the things I see of Mr. Justin Veezee, and the things I hear of him, that he is still an old stinker, in spades.

Ambrose tells me that he is certainly going to solve this mystery in the interests of justice, and I tell him that the only way to solve a murder mystery is to suspect everybody in town,

beginning with the old tomato who discovers the remains of Mr. Justin Veezee, and winding up with the gendarmes who investigate the case.

‘But,’ I say to Ambrose Hammer, ‘you do not pin the foul deed on any of these parties, but on the butler, because this is the way these things are done in all the murder-mystery movies and plays I ever see, and also in all the murder-mystery books I ever read.’

Well, at this Marty Kerle, the plain-clothes copper, states that the only trouble with my idea is that there is no butler connected with Mr. Justin Veezee’s establishment in any way, shape, manner, or form, and when I tell Ambrose that maybe we can hire a butler to double in murder for us, Ambrose becomes very indignant, and speaks to me as follows:

‘No butler commits this murder,’ Ambrose says, ‘and, furthermore, I do not consider your remarks in good taste, no matter if you are joking, or what. I am convinced that this crime is the work of nobody but a doll, because of certain clues I encounter in my survey of the premises.’

But Ambrose will not tell me what these clues are, and personally I do not care, because the way I look at it, even if some doll does give Mr. Justin Veezee the business, it is only retribution for what Mr. Justin Veezee does to other dolls in his time.

Well, the scragging of Mr. Justin Veezee is a very great sensation, and the newspapers make quite a lot of it, because there is no doubt but what it is the greatest mystery in this town in several weeks. Furthermore, anybody that ever as much as speaks to Mr. Justin Veezee in the past twenty years becomes very sorry for it when the newspapers commence printing their names and pictures, and especially any dolls who have any truck with Mr. Justin Veezee in the past, for naturally the newspaper scribes and the gendarmes are around asking them where they are at such and such an hour on such and such a date, and it is quite amazing how few guys

and dolls can remember this off-hand, especially dolls.

In fact, pretty soon the scragging of Mr. Justin Veezee becomes one of the most embarrassing propositions that ever comes off east of the Mississippi River, and many citizens are thinking of going out and scragging somebody else just to take the attention of the scribes and the gendarmes away from Mr. Justin Veezee.

As near as anybody can find out, the last party to see Mr. Justin Veezee alive the morning he is scragged is a red-headed doll at the Club Soudan by the name of Sorrel-top, and who is by no means a bad-looking doll, if you like them red-headed. This Sorrel-top is in charge of the check-room where one and all are supposed to check their hats and coats on entering the Club Soudan, and to tip Sorrel-top a shilling or two when they go out for keeping cases on these articles.

It seems that Sorrel-top always remembers when Mr. Justin Veezee leaves the Club Soudan, because he never stakes her to as much as a thin dime when he calls for his kady, and naturally Sorrel-top is bound to remember such a guy, especially as he is the only guy in the United States of America who dasts pass up Sorrel-top in this manner.

So she remembers that Mr. Justin Veezee leaves the Club Soudan on the morning in question around three bells, and the chances are he walks home, as none of the taxi jockeys who hang out in front of the Club Soudan remember seeing him, and, anyway, it is only a few blocks from the club to Mr. Justin Veezee's house, and it is a cinch he is never going to pay money to ride in a taxi just a few blocks.

Now it comes out that there are only two entrances to Mr. Justin Veezee's apartment, and one entrance is the front door, but the other entrance is a back door, but the back door is locked and barred on the inside when Mr. Justin Veezee is found, while the front door is locked with a patent snap lock, and Mrs. Swanson, the old tomato who does the housekeeping for Mr. Justin Veezee, states that she and Mr. Justin Veezee

have the only two keys in the world to this lock that she knows of, although of course the parties who live in the other apartments in the house have keys to the street door, and so has the old tomato.

Furthermore, the windows of Mr. Justin Veezee's apartment are all locked on the inside, and there seems to be no way whatever that anybody except Mr. Justin Veezee and the old tomato can get in this apartment, and the gendarmes begin looking at the old tomato very suspiciously, indeed, until she digs up a milkman by the name of Schmalz, who sees her going into the apartment house about six-thirty in the morning, and then sees her a few minutes later come tearing out of the joint yelling watch, murder, police, and the medical guys say there is no chance she can guzzle Mr. Justin Veezee in this time, unless she is a faster worker than anybody they ever hear of in all their days.

Anyway, nobody can figure a motive for the old tomato to guzzle Mr. Justin Veezee, although a couple of the newspaper scribes try to make out that maybe she is an ever-loving sweetheart of Mr. Justin Veezee in the long ago, and that he does her dirt. Personally, I consider this proposition reasonable enough, because it is a sure thing that if the old tomato is ever Mr. Justin Veezee's sweetheart, he is just naturally bound to do her dirt. But the old tomato seems so depressed over losing a customer for her housekeeping that finally nobody pays any more attention to her, and one and all go looking around for someone else who may have a motive for giving Mr. Justin Veezee the business.

Well, it comes out that there are a large number of parties, including both male and female, in this part of the country who figure to have a motive for giving Mr. Justin Veezee the business, but they are all able to prove they are some place else when this matter comes off, so the mystery keeps getting more mysterious by the minute, especially as the gendarmes say there is no chance that robbery is the motive, because Mr.

Justin Veezee has all his jewellery on him and plenty of potatoes in his pockets when he is found, and nothing in the apartment seems disturbed.

Furthermore, they find no finger-prints around and about, except some that turn out to belong to Ambrose Hammer, and at that Ambrose has a tough time explaining that he makes these fingerprints after Mr. Justin Veezee is found, and not before. They find most of Ambrose's finger-prints on the etchings, and personally I am glad I am not around fingering anything while I am in the joint, as the gendarmes may not listen to my explanations as easy as they listen to Ambrose.

Well, I do not see Ambrose for several nights, but it seems that this is because there are some shows opening around town and Ambrose is busy harpooning the actors. Finally one night he comes looking for me, and he states that as I am with him when he starts working on the mystery of who gives Mr. Justin Veezee the business, it is only fair that I be present when he exposes the party who commits this dastardly deed. And, Ambrose says, the hour now arrives, and although I do my best to show Ambrose that there can be no percentage for him in hollering copper on anybody in this matter, nothing will do but I must go with him.

And where does he take me but to the Club Soudan, and as it is early in the evening there are very few customers in the joint when we arrive, as the Club Soudan does not heat up good until along about midnight. Furthermore, I judge that the customers are strangers in the city, as they seem to be partaking of food, and nobody who is not a stranger in the city will think of partaking of food in the Club Soudan, although the liquor there is by no means bad.

Well, Ambrose and I get to talking to a character by the name of Flat-wheel Walter, who has a small piece of the joint, and who is called by this name because he walks with a gimp on one side, and by and by Ambrose asks for the Arabian acrobatic dancer, and Flat-wheel says she is at this time in her

dressing-room making up for her dance. So Ambrose takes me up a flight of stairs to a little room, which is one of several little rooms along a hallway, and sure enough, there is this Arabian acrobatic dancer making up.

And the way she is making up is by taking off her clothes, because it seems that an Arabian acrobatic dancer cannot dance with anything on except maybe a veil or two, and personally I am somewhat embarrassed by the spectacle of a doll taking off her clothes to make up, especially an Arabian. But Ambrose Hammer does not seem to mind, as he is greatly calloused to such scenes because of his experience with the modern stage, and, anyway, the Arabian manages to get a few veils around her before I can really find any grounds for complaint. But I wish to say that I am greatly surprised when I hear this Arabian dancer speak in very good English, and in fact with a Brooklyn accent, and as follows:

‘Oh, Ambrose,’ she says, ‘I am so glad to see you again.’

With this she makes out as if to put her arms around Ambrose Hammer, but then she remembers just in time that if she does this she will have to let go her hold of the veils and, anyway, Ambrose pulls away from her and stands looking at her with a very strange expression on his kisser.

Well, I will say one thing for Ambrose Hammer, and this is that he is at all times very gentlemanly, and he introduces me to the Arabian acrobatic dancer, and I notice that he speaks of her as Miss Cleghorn, although I remember that they bill her in lights in front of the Club Soudan as Illah-Illah, which is maybe her first name.

Now Ambrose gazes at Miss Cleghorn most severely, and then he speaks:

‘The game is up,’ Ambrose says. ‘If you wish to confess to me and this party, well and good, otherwise you will tell your story to the gendarmes. I know you kill Mr. Justin Veezee, and,’ Ambrose says, ‘while you may have an excellent excuse, it is against the law.’

Well, at this Miss Cleghorn turns very pale, indeed, and begins trembling so she almost forgets to hold on to her veils, and then she sits down in a chair and breathes so hard you will think she just finishes a tough tenth round. Naturally, I am somewhat surprised by Ambrose's statement, because up to this time I am not figuring Miss Cleghorn as such a doll as will harm a flea, although of course I will never lay a price against this proposition on any doll without having something of a line on her.

'Yes,' Ambrose says, speaking very severely, indeed, to Miss Cleghorn, 'you make an appointment to go to Mr. Justin Veezee's apartment the other morning after you get through with your Arabian acrobatic dancing here, to look at his etchings. I am surprised you fall for etchings, but I am glad you do, at that, because it gives me my first clue. No guy is hauling out etchings at four o'clock in the morning to look at them by himself,' Ambrose says. 'It is one of the oldest build-ups of a doll in the world,' he says.

'Well,' Ambrose goes on, 'you look at Mr. Justin Veezee's etchings. They are very bad. In fact, they are terrible. But never mind this. Presently you struggle. You are very strong on account of your Arabian acrobatic dancing. Yes,' Ambrose says, 'you are very, very, very strong. In this struggle you break Mr. Justin Veezee's neck, and now he is extremely dead. It is all very sad,' Ambrose says.

Now, I wish to state that I am greatly mortified at being present at this scene, because if I know what Ambrose Hammer says he knows about Miss Cleghorn, I will keep my trap closed, especially as there is no reward offered for any information leading to the apprehension of the party who gives Mr. Justin Veezee the business, but Ambrose is undoubtedly a very law-abiding guy, and the chances are he feels he is only doing his duty in this matter, and, furthermore, he may get a nice item for his paper out of it.

But when he tells Miss Cleghorn that she is guilty of this

unladylike conduct toward Mr. Justin Veezee, she gets up out of her chair, still holding on to her veils, and speaks to Ambrose Hammer like this:

‘No, Ambrose,’ she says, ‘you are wrong. I do not kill Mr. Justin Veezee. I admit I go to his apartment, but not to see his etchings. I go there to have a bite to eat with him, because Mr. Justin Veezee swears to me that his housekeeper will be present, and I do not know he is deceiving me until after I arrive there. Mr. Justin Veezee gets out his etchings later when he can think of nothing else. But even Mr. Justin Veezee is not so old-fashioned as to believe any doll will go to his apartment just to look at etchings nowadays. I admit we struggle, but,’ Miss Cleghorn says, ‘I do not kill him.’

‘Well,’ Ambrose says, ‘if you do not think Mr. Justin Veezee is dead, a dollar will win you a trip around the world.’

‘Yes,’ Miss Cleghorn says, ‘I know he is dead. He is dead when I leave the apartment. I am very, very sorry for this, but I tell you again I do not kill him.’

‘Well,’ Ambrose says, ‘then who does kill Mr. Justin Veezee?’

‘This I will never, never tell,’ Miss Cleghorn says.

Now, naturally, Ambrose Hammer becomes very indignant at this statement, and he tells Miss Cleghorn that if she will not tell him she will have to tell the gendarmes, and she starts in to cry like I do not know what, when all of a sudden the door of the dressing-room opens, and in comes a big, stout-built, middle-aged-looking guy, who does not seem any too well dressed, and who speaks as follows:

‘Pardon the intrusion, gentlemen,’ the guy says, ‘but I am waiting in the next room and cannot help overhearing your conversation. I am waiting there because Miss Cleghorn is going to draw enough money off her employers to get me out of this part of the country. My name,’ the guy says, ‘is Riggsby. I am the party who kills Mr. Justin Veezee.’

Well, naturally Ambrose Hammer is greatly surprised by these remarks, and so am I, but before either of us can express

ourselves, the guy goes on like this:

‘I am a roomer in the humble home of Mrs. Swanson in Ninth Avenue,’ he says. ‘I learn all about Mr. Justin Veezee from her. I sneak her key to the street door of Mr. Justin Veezee’s house, and her key to the door of Mr. Justin Veezee’s apartment one day and get copies of them made, and put the originals back before she misses them. I am hiding in Mr. Justin Veezee’s apartment the other morning waiting to stick him up.

‘Well,’ the guy says, ‘Mr. Justin Veezee comes in alone, and I am just about to step out on him and tell him to get them up, when in comes Miss Cleghorn, although of course I do not know at the time who she is. I can hear everything they say, and I see at once from their conversation that Miss Cleghorn is there under false pretences. She finally wishes to leave, and Mr. Justin Veezee attacks her. She fights valiantly, and in just a straightaway hand-to-hand struggle, I will relish a small bet on her against Mr. Justin Veezee, or any other guy. But Mr. Justin Veezee picks up a bronze statuette and is about to bean her with it, so,’ the middle-aged guy says, ‘I step into it.

‘Well,’ he says, ‘I guess maybe I am a little rougher with Mr. Justin Veezee than I mean to be, because I find myself putting a nice flying-mare hold on him and hurling him across the room. I fear the fall injures him severely. Anyway, when I pick him up he seems to be dead. So I sit him up in a chair, and take a bath towel and wipe out any chance of finger-prints around and about, and then escort Miss Cleghorn to her home.

‘I do not intend to kill Mr. Justin Veezee,’ the middle-aged-looking guy says. ‘I only intend to rob him, and I am very sorry he is no longer with us, especially as I cannot now return and carry out my original plan. But,’ he says, ‘I cannot bear to see you hand Miss Cleghorn over to the law, although I hope and trust she will never be so foolish as to go visiting the apartments of such characters as Mr. Justin Veezee again.’

‘Yes,’ Ambrose Hammer says to Miss Cleghorn, ‘why do you go there in the first place?’ Well, at this Miss Cleghorn begins crying harder than ever, and between sobs she states to Ambrose Hammer as follows:

‘Oh, Ambrose,’ she says, ‘it is because I love you so. You do not come around to see me for several nights, and I accept Mr. Justin Veezee’s invitation hoping you will hear of it, and become jealous.’

So of course there is nothing for Ambrose Hammer to do but take her in his arms and start whispering to her in such terms as guys are bound to whisper under these circumstances, and I motion the middle-aged-looking guy to go outside, as I consider this scene far too sacred for a stranger to witness.

Then about this time, Miss Cleghorn gets a call to go downstairs and do a little Arabian acrobatic dancing for the customers of the Club Soudan, and so she leaves us without ever once forgetting in all this excitement to keep a hold on her veils, although I am watching at all times to remind her in case her memory fails her in this respect.

And then I ask Ambrose Hammer something that is bothering me no little, and this is how he comes to suspect in the first place that Miss Cleghorn may know something about the scragging of Mr. Justin Veezee, even allowing that the etchings give him a clue that a doll is present when the scragging comes off. And I especially wish to know how he can ever figure Miss Cleghorn even as much as an outside chance of scragging Mr. Justin Veezee in such a manner as to break his neck.

‘Why,’ Ambrose Hammer says, ‘I will gladly tell you about this, but only in strict confidence. The last time I see Miss Cleghorn up to to-night is the night I invite her to my own apartment to look at etchings, and they are better etchings than Mr. Justin Veezee shows her, at that. And,’ Ambrose says, ‘maybe you remember I am around with my neck tied up for a

week.'

Well, the middle-aged-looking guy is waiting for us outside the Club Soudan when we come out, and Ambrose Hammer stakes him to half a C and tells him to go as far as he can on this, and I shake hands with him, and wish him luck, and as he is turning to go, I say to him like this:

'By the way, Mr. Riggsby,' I say, 'what is your regular occupation, anyway, if I am not too nosey?'

'Oh,' he says, 'until the depression comes on, I am for years rated one of the most efficient persons in my line in this town. In fact, I have many references to prove it. Yes,' he says, 'I am considered an exceptionally high-class butler.'

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Social Error

When Mr. Ziegfeld picks a doll she is apt to be above the average when it comes to looks, for Mr. Ziegfeld is by no means a chump at picking dolls. But when Mr. Ziegfeld picks Miss Midgie Muldoon, he beats his own best record, or anyway ties it. I never see a better-looking doll in my life, although she is somewhat smaller than I like them. I like my dolls big enough to take a good hold on, and Miss Midgie Muldoon is only about knee-high to a Pomeranian. But she is very cute, and I do not blame Handsome Jack Maddigan for going daffy about her.

Now most any doll on Broadway will be very glad indeed to have Handsome Jack Maddigan give her a tumble, so it is very surprising to one and all when Miss Midgie Muldoon plays the chill for Handsome Jack, especially when you figure that Miss Midgie Muldoon is nothing but a chorus doll, while Handsome Jack is quite a high shot in this town. But one night in the Hot Box when Handsome Jack sends word to Miss Midgie Muldoon by Miss Billy Perry, who is Dave the Dude's wife, that he will like to meet up with her, Miss Midgie Muldoon sends word back to Handsome Jack that she is not meeting up with tough guys.

Well, naturally this crack burns Handsome Jack up quite some. But Dave the Dude says never mind, and furthermore Dave says Miss Midgie Muldoon's crack serves Handsome Jack right for sitting around shooting off his mouth, and putting himself away as a tough guy, because if there is anything Dave hates it is a guy letting on he is tough, no matter how tough he really is, and Handsome Jack is certainly such a guy.

He is a big tall blond guy who comes up out of what they call Hell's Kitchen over on the West Side, and if he has a little more sense the chances are he will be as important a guy as Dave the Dude himself in time, instead of generally working for Dave, but Handsome Jack likes to wear very good clothes, and drink, and sit around a lot, and also do plenty of talking, and no matter how much dough he makes he never seems able to bold much of anything.

Personally, I never care to have any truck with Handsome Jack because he always strikes me as a guy who is a little too quick on the trigger to suit me, and I always figure the best you are going to get out of being around guys who are quick on the trigger is the worst of it, and so any time I see Handsome Jack I give him the back of my neck. But there are many people in this world such as Basil Valentine who love to be around these characters.

This Basil Valentine is a little guy who-wears horn cheaters and writes articles for the magazines, and is personally a very nice little guy, and as harmless as a water snake, but he cannot have a whole lot of sense, or he will not be hanging out with Handsome Jack and other such characters.

If a guy hangs out with tough guys long enough he is to get to thinking maybe he is tough himself, and by and other people may get the idea he is tough, and the first thing you know along comes some copper in plain clothes, such as Johnny Brannigan, of the strongarm squad, and biffs him on the noggin with a blackjack just to see how tough he is. As I say, Basil Valentine is a very harmless guy, but after he is hanging out with Handsome Jack a while, I hear Basil talking very tough to a bus boy, and the chances are he is building himself up to talk tough to a waiter, and then maybe to a head waiter, and finally he may consider himself tough enough to talk tough to anybody.

I can show you many a guy who is supposed to be strictly legitimate sitting around with guys who are figured as tough

guys, and why this is I do not know, but I am speaking to Waldo Winchester, the newspaper scribe, about the proposition one night, and Waldo Winchester, who is a half-smart guy in many respects, says it is what is called an underworld complex. Waldo Winchester says many legitimate people are much interested in the doings of tough guys, and consider them very romantic, and he says if I do not believe it look at all the junk the newspapers print making heroes out of tough guys.

Waldo Winchester says the underworld complex is a very common complex and that Basil Valentine has it, and so has Miss Harriet Mackyle, or she will not be all the time sticking her snoot into joints where tough guys hang out. This Miss Harriet Mackyle is one of these rich dolls who wears snaky-looking evening clothes, and has her hair cut like a boy's, with her ears sticking out, and is always around the night traps, generally with some guy with a little mustache, and a way of talking like an Englishman, and come to think of it I do see her in tough joints more than somewhat, saying hello to different parties such as nobody in their right minds will say hello to, including such as Red Henry, who is just back from Dannemora, after being away for quite a spell for taking things out of somebody's safe and blowing the safe open to take these things.

In fact, I see Miss Harriet Mackyle dancing one night in the Hearts and Flowers club, which is a very tough joint, indeed, and who is she dancing with but Red Henry, and when I ask Waldo Winchester what he makes of this proposition, he says it is part of the underworld complex he is talking about. He says Miss Harriet Mackyle probably thinks it smart to tell her swell friends she dances with a safe blower, although personally if I am going to dance with a safe blower at all, which does not seem likely, I will pick me out a nicer safe blower than Red Henry, because he is such a guy as does not take a bath since he leaves Dannemora, and he is back from

Dannemora for several months.

One party who does not seem to have much of Waldo Winchester's underworld complex as far as I can see is Midgie Muldoon, because I never see her around any night traps except such as the Hot Box and the Sixteen Hundred club, which are considered very nice places, and reasonably safe for anybody who does not get too far out of line, and Miss Midgie Muldoon is always with very legitimate guy such as Buddy Donaldson, the song writer, or Walter Gumble, who plays the trombone in Paul Whiteman's band, or maybe sometimes with Paul Hawley, the actor.

Furthermore, when she is around such places, Miss Midgie Muldoon minds her own business quite a bit, and always looks right past Handsome Jack Maddigan, which burns Jack up all the more. It is the first time Handsome Jack ever runs into a doll who does not seem excited about him, and he does not know what to make of such a situation.

Well, what happens but Dave the Dude comes to me one day and says to me like this: "Listen," Dave says, "this doll Miss Harriet Mackyle is one of my best customers for high-grade merchandise and is as good as wheat in the bin, and she is asking a favor of me. She is giving a party Sunday night in her joint over on Park Avenue, and she wishes me to invite some of the mob, so go around and tell about a dozen guys to be there all dressed, and not get too fresh, because a big order of Scotch and champagne goes with the favor."

Now such a party is by no means unusual, although generally it is some swell guy who gives it rather than a doll, and he gets Broadway guys to be there to show his pals what a mixer he is. Waldo Winchester says it is to give color to things, though where the color comes in I do not know, for Broadway guys, such as will go to a party like this, are apt to just sit around and say nothing, and act very gentlemanly, because they figure they are on exhibition like freaks, and the only way you can get them to such parties in the first place is through

some such connection as Miss Harriet Mackyle has with Dave the Dude.

Anyway, I go around and about and tell a lot of guys what Dave the Dude wishes them to do, and among others I tell Handsome Jack, who is tickled to death by the invitation, because if there is anything Jack loves more than anything it is to be in a spot where he can show off some. Furthermore, Handsome Jack has a sneaking idea Miss Harriet Mackyle is red hot for him because she sometimes gives him the old eye when she sees him around the Sixteen Hundred club, and other spots, but then she does the same thing to Big Nig, and a lot of other guys I can mention, because that is just naturally the way Miss Harriet Mackyle is. But of course I do not speak of this to Handsome Jack. Basil Valentine is with Jack when I invite him, so I tell Basil to come too, because I do not wish him to think I am a snob.

It turns out that Basil is one of the very first guys to show up Sunday night at Miss Harriet Mackyle's apartment, where I am already on hand to help get in the Scotch and champagne and to make Miss Harriet Mackyle acquainted with such of the mob as I invite, although I find we are about lost in the shuffle of guys with little mustaches, and dolls in evening clothes that leave plenty of them sticking out here and there. It seems everybody on Broadway is there, as well as a lot of Park Avenue, and Mr. Ziegfeld is especially well represented and among his people I see Miss Midgie Muldoon, although I have to stand on tiptoe to see her on account of the guys with little mustaches around her, and their interest in Miss Midgie Muldoon proves that they are not such saps as they look, even if they do wear little mustaches.

It is a very large apartment, and the first thing I notice is a big green parrot swinging in a ring hung from the ceiling in a corner of what seems to be the main room, and the reason I notice this parrot is because it is letting out a squawk now and then, and yelling different words, such as Polly wants a

cracker. There are also a lot of canary birds hung around the joint, so I judge Miss Harriet Mackyle loves animals, as well as peculiar people, such as she has for guests. I am somewhat surprised to see Red Henry all dressed up in evening clothes moving around among the guests. I do not invite Red Henry, so I suppose Miss Harriet Mackyle invites him, or he hears rumours of the party, and just crashes in, but personally I consider it very bad taste on Red's part to show himself in such a spot, and so does everyone else that knows him, although he seems to be minding his own business pretty well.

Finally when the serious drinking is under way, and a good time is being had by one and all, Miss Harriet Mackyle comes over to me and says to me like this: "Now tell me about your different friends, so I can tell my other guests. They will be thrilled to death meeting these bad characters."

"Well," I say, "you see the little guy over there staring at you as if you are a ghost, or some such? Well, he is nobody but Bad Basil Valentine, who will kill you quicker than you can say scat, and maybe quicker. He is undoubtedly the toughest guy here tonight, or anywhere else in this man's town for that matter. Yes, ma'am, Bad Basil Valentine is one dead tough mug," I say, "although he is harmless looking at this time. Bad Basil kills many a guy in his day. In fact, Miss Mackyle," I say, "Bad Basil can scarcely sleep good any night he does not kill some guy."

"My goodness!" Miss Harriet Mackyle says, looking Basil over very carefully. "He does not look so bad at first glance, although now that I examine him closely I believe I do detect a sinister gleam in his eye."

Well, Miss Harriet Mackyle can hardly wait until she gets away from me, and the next I see of her she has Basil Valentine surrounded and is almost chewing his ear off as she gabs to him, and anybody can see that Basil is all pleased up by this attention. In fact, Basil is snagged if ever I see a guy snagged, and personally I do not blame him because Miss

Harriet Mackyle may not look a million, but she has a couple, and you can see enough of her in her evening clothes to know that nothing about her is phony.

The party is going big along toward one o' clock when all of a sudden in comes Handsome Jack Maddigan with half a heat on, and in five minutes he is all over the joint, drinking everything that is offered him, and making a fast play for all the dolls, and talking very loud. He is sored up more than somewhat when he finds Miss Harriet Mackyle does not give much of a tumble, because he figures she will be calling him on top the minute he blows in, but Miss Harriet Mackyle too busy with Basil Valentine finding out from Basil how he knocks off six of Al Capone's mob out in Chicago one time when he is out there on a pleasure trip.

Well, while feeling sored up about Miss Harriet Mackyle passing him up for Basil Valentine, and not knowing how it comes Basil is in so stout with her, Handsome Jack bumps into Red Henry, and Red Henry makes some fresh crack to Jack about Basil moving in on him, which causes Handsome Jack to hit Red Henry on the chin, and knock him half into the lap of Miss Midgie Muldoon, who is sitting in a chair with a lot of little mustaches around her.

Naturally this incident causes some excitement for a moment. But the way Miss Midgie Muldoon takes it is very surprising. She just sort of dusts Red Henry off her, and stands up no bigger than a demi-tasse, and looks Handsome Jack right in the eye very cool, and says, "Ah, a parlor tough guy." Then she walks away, leaving Handsome Jack with his mouth open, because he does not know up to this moment that Miss Midgie Muldoon is present.

Well, somebody heaves Red Henry out of the joint, and the party continues, but I see Handsome Jack wandering around looking very lonesome, and with not much speed left compared to what he brings in. Somehow I figure Handsome Jack is looking for Miss Midgie Muldoon, but she keeps off

among the little mustaches, and finally Handsome Jack takes to belting the old grape right freely to get his zing back. He gets himself pretty well organized, and when he suddenly comes upon Miss Midgie Muldoon standing by herself for a moment, he is feeling very brisk indeed, and he says to her like this:

“Hello, Beautiful, are you playing the hard-to-get for me?”

But Miss Midgie Muldoon only looks him in the eye again and says: “Ah, the parlor tough guy! Go away, tough guy. I do not like tough guys.”

Well, this is not so encouraging when you come to think of it, but Handsome Jack is a guy who will never be ruled off not trying with the dolls, and he is just about to begin giving her a little more work, when all of a sudden a voice goes “Ha-ha-ha,” and then it says: “Hello, you fool!”

Now of course it is nothing but the parrot talking, and it says again, “Ha-ha-ha. Hello, you fool!” Of course the parrot, whose name turns out to be Polly, does not mean Handsome Jack, but of course Handsome Jack does not know the parrot does not mean him, and naturally he feels very much insulted. Furthermore, he has plenty of champagne inside him. So all of a sudden he outs with the old equalizer and lets go at Polly, and the next minute there are green feathers flying all over the joint, and poor old Mister, or maybe Missus, Polly is stretched out as dead as a doornail, and maybe deader.

Well, I never see a doll carry on like Miss Harriet Mackyle does when she finds out her Polly is a goner, and what she says to Handsome Jack is really very cutting, and quite extensive, and the chances are Handsome Jack will finally haul off and smack Miss Harriet Mackyle in the snoot, only he realizes he is already guilty of a very grave social error in shooting the parrot, and he does not wish to make it any worse.

Anyway, Miss Midgie Muldoon is standing looking at Handsome Jack-out of her great big round beautiful eyes with what Waldo Winchester, the scribe, afterward tells me is

plenty of scorn, and it looks to me as if Handsome Jack feels worse about Miss Midgie Muldoon's looks than he does about what Miss Harriet Mackyle is saying to him. But Miss Midgie Muldoon never opens her mouth. She just keeps looking at him for quite a spell, and then finally walks away, and it looks to me as if she is ready to bust out crying any minute, maybe because she feels sorry for Polly.

Well, naturally Handsome Jack's error busts up the party, because Miss Harriet Mackyle does not wish to take any chances on Handsome Jack starting in to pot her canaries, so we all go away leaving Miss Harriet Mackyle weeping over what she can find of Polly, and Basil Valentine crying with her, which I consider very chummy of Basil, at that.

A couple of nights later Basil comes into Mindy's restaurant, where I happen to be sitting with Handsome Jack, and anyone can tell that Basil is much worried about something.

"Jack," he says, "Miss Harriet Mackyle is very, very, very angry about you shooting Polly. In fact, she hates you, because Polly is a family heirloom."

"Well," Jack says, "tell her I apologize, and will get her a new parrot as soon as I get the price. You know I am broke now. Tell her I am very sorry, although," Jack says, "her has no right to call me a fool, and I leave this to anybody."

"Harriet Mackyle is after me every day to shoot you, Jack," Basil says. "She thinks I am a very tough guy, and and that I will shoot anybody on short notice, and she wishes me to shoot you. In fact, she is somewhat displeased because I do not shoot you when you shoot poor Polly, but of course I explain to her I do not have a gun at the moment. Now Miss Harriet Mackyle says if I do not shoot you, she will not love me, and I greatly wish to have Miss Harriet Mackyle love me, because I am practically daffy about her. So," Basil says, "I am wondering bow much you will take to hold still and let me shoot you, Jack?"

"Why," Handsome Jack says, very much astonished, "you

must be screwy.”

“Of course I do not mean to really shoot you, Jack,” Basil says. “I mean to maybe shoot you with a blank cartridge, so Miss Harriet Mackyle will think I am shooting you sure enough, which will make her very grateful to me. I am thinking that maybe I can pay you \$1,500 for such a job although this sum represents nearly my life savings.”

“Why,” Handsome Jack says, “your proposition sounds very reasonable, at that. I am just wondering where I can get hold of a few bobs to send Miss Midgie Muldoon a bar pin, or some such, and see if I cannot round myself up with her. She is still playing plenty of chill for me. You better make it two grand while you are about it.”

Well, Basil Valentine finally agrees to pay the two grand. Furthermore, Basil promises to put the dough up in advance with Dave the Dude, or some other reliable party, as this is rather an unusual business deal, and naturally Jack wishes to have his interests fully protected.

Well, the thing comes off a few nights later in the Hot Box, and it is all pretty well laid out in advance. It is understood that Basil is to bring Miss Harriet Mackyle into the Box after regular hours when there are not apt to be any too many people around, and to find Handsome Jack there. Basil is to out with a gun and take a crack at Handsome Jack, and Handsome Jack is to let on he is hit, and Basil is to get Miss Harriet Mackyle out of the joint in the confusion.

Handsome Jack promises to lay low a few weeks afterwards so it will look as if he is dead, and Basil figures that in the meantime Miss Harriet Mackyle will be so grateful to him that she will love him very much indeed, and maybe marry him, which is really the big idea with Basil.

It is pretty generally known to one and all what is coming off, and quite a number of guys drift into the Hot Box during the night, including Dave the Dude, who seems to be getting quite a bang out of the situation. But who also bobs up very

unexpectedly but Miss Midgie Muldoon with Buddy Donaldson, the song writer.

Handsome Jack is all upset by Miss Midgie Muldoon being there, but she never as much as looks at him. So Handsome Jack takes to drinking Scotch more than somewhat, and everybody commences to worry about whether he will hold still for Basil Valentine to shoot him, even with a blank cartridge. The Hot Box closes at 3 o'clock in the morning, and everybody is always turned out except the regulars. So by 3:30 there are only about a dozen guys and dolls in the joint when in comes Basil Valentine and Miss Harriet Mackyle.

Handsome Jack happens to be standing with his back to the door and not far from the table where Miss Midgie Muldoon and this Buddy Donaldson are sitting when Basil and Miss Harriet Mackyle come in, and right away Basil sings out, his voice wobbling no little: "Handsome Jack Maddigan, your time has come!" At this Handsome Jack turns around, and there is Basil Valentine tugging a big rod out of the pocket of his pants.

The next thing anybody knows, there is a scream, and a voice cries: "Jack! Look out, Jack!" and out of her seat and over to Handsome Jack Maddigan bounces Miss Midgie Muldoon, and just as Basil finally raises the rod and turns it on, Miss Midgie Muldoon plants herself right in front of Jack and stretches out her arms on either side of her as if to shield him.

Well, the gun goes bingo in Basil's hand, but instead of falling like he is supposed to do, Handsome Jack stands there with his mouth open looking at Miss Midgie Muldoon, not knowing what to make of her jumping between him and the gun, and it is a good thing he does not fall, at that, because he is able to catch Miss Midgie Muldoon as she starts to keel over. At first we think maybe it is only a faint, but she has on a low-neck dress, and across her left shoulder there slowly spreads a red smear, and what is this red smear but blood, and as Handsome Jack grabs her she says to him like this: "Hold me,

dear, I am hurt.”

Now this is most unexpected, indeed, and is by no means a part of the play. Basil Valentine is standing by the door with the rod in his duke looking quite astonished, and making no move to get Miss Harriet Mackyle out of the joint as he is supposed to the minute he fires, and Miss Harriet Mackyle is letting out a few offhand screams which are very piercing, and saying she never thinks that Basil will take her seriously and really plug anybody for her, although she also says she appreciates his thoughtfulness, at that.

You can see Basil is standing there wondering what goes wrong, when Dave the Dude, who is a fast thinker under all circumstances, takes a quick peek at Miss Midgie Muldoon, and then jumps across the room and nails Basil. “Why,” Dave says to Basil, “you are nothing but a rascal. You mean to kill him after all. You do not shoot a blank, you throw a slug, and you get Miss Midgie Muldoon with it in the shoulder.”

Well, Basil is a pretty sick-looking toad as Dave the Dude takes hold of him, and Miss Harriet Mackyle is putting on a few extra yips when Basil says: “My goodness, Dave,” he says. “I never know this gun is really loaded. In fact, I forget all about getting a gun of my own until the last minute, and I am looking around for one when Red Henry comes along and says he will lend me his. I explain to him how the whole proposition is a joke, and tell him I must have blanks, and he kindly takes the lead out of the cartridges in front of my own eyes and makes them blank.”

“The chances are Red Henry works a quick change on you,” Dave the Dude says. “Red Henry is very angry at Jack for hitting him on the chin.”

Then Dave takes the rod out of Basil’s hand and breaks it open, and sure enough there are enough real slugs in it to sink a rowboat and no blanks whatever, which surprises Basil Valentine no little.

“Now,” Dave says, “get away from here before Jack realizes

what happens, and keep out of sight until you hear from me, because if Miss Midgie Muldoon croaks it may cause some gossip. Furthermore,” Dave says, “take this squawking doll with you.”

Well, you can see that Dave the Dude is pretty much steamed up, and he remains steamed up until it comes out that Miss Midgie Muldoon is only a little bit shot, and is by no means in danger of dying. We take her over to the Polyclinic Hospital, and a guy there digs the bullet out of her shoulder, and we leave her there with Handsome Jack holding her tight in his arms, and swearing he will never be tough again, but will get her a nice little home on Basil Valentine’s two grand, and find himself a job, and take no more part in his old life, all of which seems to sound fair enough.

It is a couple of years before we hear of Miss Harriet Mackyle again, and then she is Mrs. Basil Valentine, and is living in Naples over in Italy, and the people there are very much surprised because Mrs. Basil Valentine never lets Mr. Basil Valentine associate with guys over ten years old, and never lets him handle anything more dangerous than a niblick.

So this is about all there is to the story, except that when Handsome Jack Maddigan and Miss Midgie Muldoon stand to be married by Father Leonard, Dave the Dude sizes them up a minute, and then turns to me and says like this: “Look,” Dave says, “and tell me where does Miss Midgie Muldoon’s shoulder come up to on Jack’s left side.”

“Well,” I say, “her shoulder comes just up to Jack’s heart.”

“So you see,” Dave says, “it is just as well for Jack she stops Basil’s bullet, at that.”

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Tight Shoes

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

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

Now Hymie is in pretty much of a hurry, as he knows of a right good thing in the first race at Belmont, so he tells Rupert Salsinger to kindly get out a pair of shoes, size 8 1/2D, and make haste about it.

Well, Rupert Salsinger takes one look at Hymie's dogs, and he can see that Hymie can no more wear an 8 1/2D than he can fly, for Hymie has large, flat Bronx feet that can cover as much ground as there is between second and third when Hymie is just standing still.

So Rupert Salsinger gets out a measuring gadget, and puts one of Hymie's feet in it, and tells Hymie that what he really needs is a 10 1/2EE, but Hymie immediately becomes very indignant, as he is extremely sensitive about the size of his feet, and he says he knows what size shoes he wears, and if Rupert Salsinger does not care to give him what he wants, he will take his custom elsewhere.

Now if old man Bilby is personally present, he will know enough to give Hymie his usual 10 1/2EE's, and tell him they are 8 1/2D's and Hymie will go on about his business, and think nothing more of it, but Rupert Salsinger is new to Bilby's store, and furthermore he is a very honest and conscientious young

character, and does not believe in skullduggery even about a pair of shoes, so he outs with some 8 1/2D's and shows Hymie the mark in them, and Hymie puts them on, and says they are just the right size, and away he goes to the race track.

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

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

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

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

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

So there Rupert Salsinger is without a position, and with only half a week's wages consisting of about seven slugs in his pocket, and as it is the first position Rupert has since the depression sets in, he is downcast no little, especially as he is hoping to save enough money in this position to justify him in asking Miss Minnie Schultz, who lives over on Tenth Avenue, to be his bride.

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

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

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

Well, anyway, Rupert Salsinger goes up Broadway feeling

very sad and blue, and finally he stops in the Bridle Grill, and steps up to the bar and calls for a glass of beer, and while he is drinking this beer, he gets to thinking what a cruel world it is to be sure, so he calls for another beer, with a little rye whisky on the side, for while Rupert Salsinger is by no means a rumdum, he feels that this is an occasion that calls for a few drams, anyway.

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

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

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

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

Calvin Colby is undoubtedly slightly mulled when he

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

‘Hah-ah-ah-hah.’

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

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

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

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

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

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

Well, Calvin Colby is practically petrified with horror to think of what Rupert Salsinger suffers, although he does not consider Rupert’s tears over Miss Minnie Schultz quite manly, as Calvin Colby personally never experiences love, and regards dolls as only plaintiffs, but he admits that his soul seethes with indignation at the idea of Miss Minnie Schultz’s papa wishing to force her into a marriage with Gus Schmelk. In

fact, Calvin Colby says that while he does not know this Gus Schmelk he is willing to make a little wager that he is nothing but a bounder and a cad.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Then Rupert takes the box and plants it right in the centre of all the groups, and Calvin Colby gets up on the box and begins letting out loud yells to attract attention. Naturally Calvin Colby can out-yell any of the speakers in Columbus Circle, because he is fresh, and furthermore he is full of old-fashioned, and it is well known that there is nothing like old-fashioned to help anybody yell.

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

Some think at first that maybe he is selling a patent

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

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

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

‘Look at the daffydill.’

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

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

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

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

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

So he makes room for Rupert Salsinger on the box, and Rupert puts on a really wonderful speech, because it seems that Rupert is not only a natural-born speaker, but he knows extracts from great speeches by such characters as Father Coughlin, Patrick Henry, F. D. Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln and Robert Ingersoll, and he drops in these extracts here and there as he goes along, and they are very effective.

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

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

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

And with this, Calvin Colby starts off down Broadway, walking in the middle of the street, and all he is thinking of at the moment is to remove himself from Columbus Circle, and Rupert starts off with him, but all the other citizens present fall in behind them, so there they are leading a big march. There are only a few hundred citizens behind them when they start, but before they go two blocks this number increases to several thousand, because naturally the spectacle of a character in a high hat and a white-lined opera cape leading a procession

down Broadway is most intriguing to one and all who behold same, and everybody wishes to find out what it means.

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

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

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

Naturally the commotion brings out a number of officers of the law, who go around inquiring what is coming off here, and when they are unable to learn what is coming off, they start slapping citizens right and left with their nightsticks, and the result is a great deal of new business for the near-by hospitals.

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

Well, by and by the reporters from the newspapers arrive on the scene and start getting interviews here and there about the goings on, and it seems from the stories in the papers the

next morning that the reporters learn that it is all the upshot of a great new movement for social justice organized by Rupert Salsinger, a famous young student of such matters, and supported by Calvin Colby, the well-known young multi-millionaire thinker, although of course it is a big surprise to Rupert Salsinger to learn that he is famous, and a much bigger surprise to Calvin Colby to hear that he is a thinker, and in fact this sounds like libel to Calvin Colby, when he gets around to reading it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He notices that she has taffy-coloured hair, and big blue eyes, and a lovely speaking voice, and hands like the ears of little tiny white rabbits, and feet like little tiny mice, and a complexion like Grade-A milk, and a shape that is wonderful to behold, and great intelligence, and charm, and in fact Miss

Minnie Schultz is the first doll Calvin Colby ever beholds that he does not figure a plaintiff.

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

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

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

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

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

Then Rupert says to Calvin Colby:

'Comrade,' he says, 'I realize that you loathe and despise all characters of a female nature, but,' he says, 'I am going to ask

you to make a great sacrifice for me. I will deem it an act of fealty to our cause, and of personal friendship,' Rupert says, 'if you will occasionally go over to Tenth Avenue and do anything you can to protect me in that direction from vipers in my bosom and snakes in the grass.'

There are tears in Rupert's eyes as he makes this request, and naturally Calvin Colby promises to assist him in this emergency, and presently between looking after Rupert's interests with Miss Minnie Schultz and signing cheques as treasurer of the American Amalgamation for Social Justice for Rupert's campaign, Calvin Colby finds little time for his occupation of getting around.

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

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

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

So Rupert Salsinger steps up behind Hymie, and takes him

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

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

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

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

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

'Minnie,' Rupert says, 'I love you with all my heart and soul, and now that my future is open before me, bright and shining, I wish you to be my wife, and never mind what your papa says to the contrary about Gus Schmelk. He is strictly a wrong gee. I mean Gus Schmelk,' Rupert says. 'Let us be

married at once, and my friend, my pal, my comrade, Mr. Calvin Colby, will stand up with us as my best man.'

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

Naturally, Rupert Salsinger is greatly vexed to hear this news, and in fact he is so vexed that he takes the tight shoes that are the cause of his tardiness, and throws them as far as he can, and as straight as he can, which is plumb across the street and through the plate-glass window of Gus Schmelk's delicatessen store.

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

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

But although Gus Schmelk's store is in the new combi-

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

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Lonely Heart

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

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

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

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

But Nicely-Nicely is so discouraged that he does not as much as send them word that he is sick, let alone anything about the price. He just pulls the covers up over his head and lies there waiting for the finish and thinking to himself what a

tough thing it is to pass away of pneumonia, and especially in Newark, N.J., and nobody along Broadway knows of his predicament until Nicely-Nicely appears in person some months later and relates this story to me.

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

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

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

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

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

But at that it seems that he has enough vitality left to beat

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

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

There are many other patients in the same ward with Nicely-Nicely, and he sees their ever-loving wives, and daughters, and maybe their sweet-peas visiting them, and hears their cheerful chatter, and he gets to thinking that here he is without chick or child, and no home to go to, and it just about breaks his heart.

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

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

He takes to reading to keep himself from thinking of his favourite dishes, and of his solitary life, and one day in a

bundle of old magazines and newspapers that they give him to read, he comes upon a bladder that is called the Matrimonial Tribune, which seems to be all about marriage, and in this Matrimonial Tribune Nicely-Nicely observes an advertisement that reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

mention his habit of tapping out any time a 4-to-5 shot comes along, which is as bad a habit as anybody can have, and finally she says she is well satisfied with him and will be pleased to marry him when he is able to walk.

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

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

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

Well, it comes on supper-time the first night. Nicely-Nicely is there and he is delighted to observe that the Widow Crumb is making quite an uproar in the kitchen with the pots and pans, and this uproar is music to Nicely-Nicely's ears as by now he is in the mood to put on the hot meat very good, and he is wondering if the Widow Crumb is as excellent a cook as she lets on in her advertisement.

It turns out that she is even better. It turns out that she is as fine a cook as ever straddles a skillet, and the supper she spreads for Nicely-Nicely is too good for a king. There is round steak hammered flat and fried in a pan, with thick cream

gravy, and hot biscuits, and corn on the cob, and turnip greens, and cottage-fried potatoes, and lettuce with hot bacon grease poured over it, and apple-pie, and coffee, and I do not know what all else, and Nicely-Nicely almost founders himself, because it is the first time since he leaves the hospital that he gets a chance to move into real food.

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

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

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

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

Nicely-Nicely commences to figure this is about as soft a drop-in as anybody can wish.

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

One evening after they are married several months, the Widow Crumb is sitting on what is left of Nicely-Nicely's lap, and she puts her arms around his neck, and speaks to him as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Why,' Nicely-Nicely says, 'you are quite right, and I will get my life insured as soon as I get enough strength to go out and

raise a few dibs. Yes, indeed,' Nicely-Nicely says, 'I will take care of this situation promptly.'

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

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

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

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

For a while he finds it difficult to get as much sleep as he requires, because the Widow Crumb is a great hand for staying up late reading books in their bedroom by kerosene lamp, and

at the same time eating molasses candy which she personally manufactures, and sometimes she does both in bed, and the molasses candy bothers Nicely-Nicely no little until he becomes accustomed to it.

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

Nicely-Nicely never discusses the books with the Widow Crumb, because in the first place he figures it is none of his business, and in the second place, the more she reads the better chance he has of getting to sleep before she starts snoring, because it seems that as a snorer the Widow Crumb is really all-America material, although of course Nicely-Nicely is too much of a gentleman to make an issue of this.

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

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

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

'Jake who?' Nicely-Nicely says.

'I do not recall his other name,' Harley says. 'He is her third or fourth husband, I do not remember which. Jake is the only one the Widow Crumb ever loves, although she does not discover this until after Jake departs. So,' Harley says, 'in memory of Jake she always sets his place at the table, and gives him the best she has. She misses Jake and wishes to feel that he is still with her.'

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

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

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

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

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

'Then comes Jake,' Harley says, 'unless Jake is Number Three and the hanging item is Number Four. I do not remember exactly. But the Widow Crumb never employs arsenic or other matters of this nature again. It is too slow. Jake lingers for hours. Besides,' Harley says, 'she realizes it may leave traces if anybody happens to get nosy.'

'Jake is a fine-looking character,' Harley says. 'But a ne'er-do-well. He is a plumber from Salt Lake City, Utah, and has a

hearty laugh. He is always telling funny stories. He is a great eater, even better than you, and he loves beans the way the Widow Crumb cooks them, with bacon and tomatoes. He suffers no little from the arsenic. He gets it in his beans. Number Five comes upon a black widow spider in his bed. He is no good. I mean Number Five.'

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

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

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

'Oh, sure,' Harley says. 'Why do you suppose she marries them? It is a good living to her because of the insurance,' he says, 'although,' he says, 'to show you how bright she is, she does not insure Number Five for a dime, so people can never say she is making a business of the matter. He is a total loss to her, but it quiets talk. I am wondering,' Harley says, 'what she will think up for you.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Well, Nicely-Nicely now sits down and gives this general situation some serious consideration, because he is now convinced that the Widow Crumb is unworthy of his com-

panionship as a husband. In fact, Nicely-Nicely makes up his mind to take steps at his earliest convenience to sue her for divorce on the grounds of incompatibility, but in the meantime he has to think up a means of getting away from her, and while he is thinking of this phase of the problem, she calls him to supper.

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

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

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

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

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

about this discrimination, and he turns to Jake's place, and in a very sarcastic tone of voice he speaks out loud as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'What Jake?' the Widow Crumb says again.

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

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

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

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

Then he lets on that he is listening to something Jake is

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

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

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

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

And with this he jumps up and runs to Jake's chair and lets on that he is helping a character up from the floor, and as he stoops over and pretends to be lifting this character, Nicely-Nicely grunts no little, as if the character is very heavy, and the grunts are really on the level with Nicely-Nicely as he is now full of spare-ribs, because he never really stops eating while he is talking, and stooping is not easy for him.

At these actions the Widow Crumb lets out a scream and

drops the bowl of salad on the floor.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Then Nicely-Nicely hears one extra loud scream, and after this there is much silence, and he figures that now is the time for him to take his departure, and he starts down the same

path towards the barn, but figuring to cut off across the fields to the road that leads to the town when he observes a spark of light bobbing up and down on the path ahead of him, and presently he comes upon old Harley with a lantern in his hand.

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

‘Oh,’ he says, ‘there you are. I guess there is some mistake here,’ he says. ‘The Widow Crumb tells me to wait in the barn until after supper and she will send you out after me, and,’ Harley says, ‘she also tells me to be sure and remove the cover of this old well as soon as it comes on dark. And,’ Harley says, ‘of course, I am expecting to find you in the well at this time, but who is in there but the Widow Crumb. I hear her screech as she drops in. I judge she must be hastening along the path and forgets about telling me to remove the cover of the well,’ Harley says. ‘It is most confusing,’ he says.

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

‘Hello, down there,’ Harley shouts. ‘Hello, hello, hello.’

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

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

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

Naturally Nicely-Nicely is somewhat surprised to observe these tears because personally he is by no means greatly distressed by the Widow Crumb being down the well, especially when he thinks of how she tries to put him down the well

first, and finally he asks Harley why he is so downcast, and Harley speaks as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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The Big Umbrella

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

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

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

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

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

wonder what he is advertising.

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

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

Well, it is very seldom I see Spider McCoy but what he is speaking of some guy who is the next heavy-weight champion of the world, and they nearly always remind him of Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney, and sometimes of Max Schmeling, so I am about to go about my business when Spider grabs me by the arm and compels me to accompany him.

‘Who is the guy, Spider?’ I say.

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

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

‘We will find out,’ Spider McCoy says. ‘We will tail him until we learn where he hangs out so I can make a connection

with him. Look at his chest development,' Spider says. 'Look at his small waist-line,' he says. 'Look at the shape of his head.'

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

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

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

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

'Nothing,' Sammy says. 'Not a quarter. The hotel where he is stopping catches him out to a society tea the other afternoon and puts a hickey in his keyhole and now he cannot get at his other clothes and has to go around the way you see him. The chances are,' Sammy says, 'he is in here looking to cadge a drink or a bite to eat.'

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

thing they are willing to talk to anybody.

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

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

‘Why,’ the ex-king says, ‘he does not do anything to vex me. I am quite unvexed at the time. It is almost inadvertent. The taxi-driver gets off his seat and starts to run after a passenger that fails to settle his account with him, and he is about to collide with me there on the sidewalk, so,’ he says, ‘I just put out my right hand to ward him off, and he runs into it with his chin and knocks himself unconscious. I must look him up some day and express my regrets. But,’ he says, ‘I will never think of deliberately striking anybody without serious provocation.’

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

But Spider McCoy cannot look at six feet two and one

hundred and ninety pounds of anybody under thirty without becoming most avaricious, and so after a couple of more Scotches, he begins feeling the ex-king's muscles, which causes the ex-king to laugh quite heartily, as it seems he is a little ticklish in spots, and finally Spider says:

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

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

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

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

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

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

So then Spider McCoy explains to him how he can make a ton of money by winning the heavy-weight championship of the world and that all he requires to do this is to have Spider for his manager. Furthermore, Spider explains that all he will ask for being the manager is 33 1/3 per cent of the ex-king's earnings, with the expenses off the top, which means before they cut up anything.

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

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

'The best, your Majesty,' Spider says.

'Call me Jonas,' the ex-king says again. 'All right, then,'

Jonas says, 'I will become heavy-weight champion of the world as you say, and make a ton of money, and then I snap my fingers at Dictator Poltafuss, the dirty rat.'

'The big heel,' Spider says.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

somewhere on Uncle Spider's prospects.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Of course Spider does not tell Jonas that these contests are dipsydoos and Jonas thinks he really is belting out these porter-houses, and as he is getting pretty nice money for the work, he feels very well, indeed. Anybody will tell you that it helps build up a young fighter's confidence to let him see a few

people take naps in front of him as he is coming along, though Jonas is slightly bewildered the night at the Sun Casino when a generally very reliable waterboy by the name of Charley Drunkley misses his cue and falls down before Jonas can hit him.

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

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

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

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

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

Well, the dough is rolling in on Spider and Jonas just with

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

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

‘Anyway,’ Spider says, ‘what a sap I will be to throw him in with competition as long as the suckers will pay to see him as he is. I can go on with him indefinitely this way,’ Spider says, ‘but one smack on the chops may finish us up for good. Yes,’ he says, ‘I think I will let well enough alone.’

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

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

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

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

at her to see how she looks, but that she will go just to spite him, and so they sail away.

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

‘Come with me to number twenty-three,’ he says. ‘I am on a meet there with somebody, and I will tell you all.’ So from now on for a while this is Spider McCoy’s story:

Well [Spider says] we have a most satisfactory journey in every respect. Going over on the boat, what happens what with the moon and the stars, and the music, and dancing, and all this and that, but Margie and Jonas get so they are on slightly better terms, and this makes things more pleasant for me, as they are together quite a bit, and this gives me time to catch up on my drinking, which I neglect no little when I am so busy looking after Jonas’s interests.

He gets a wonderful reception when we reach his old home country, what with bands and soldiers, and one thing and another, but I am surprised to find that none of the natives hear of me as his manager. In fact, it seems that his reputation there rests entirely on once being king, and they never hear of his accomplishments in the ring, which consist of eighteen consecutive k.o.’s. This really hurts my feelings after all my work with him in the gym and the trouble I go to in picking his opponents.

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

Well, we are not there more than a few hours before we get a line on what is doing, and what is doing is that the people

wish Jonas to be king again, and they are making life a burden for this Dictator Poltafuss, and his cabinet, and Poltafuss figures it will be a good scheme to put Jonas back, all right, but first he wishes to discuss certain terms of his own with Jonas.

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

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

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

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

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

He is a big umbrella.

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

‘He says,’ Jonas says, ‘that I will be returned to the throne if I first marry his sister. She is the chromo sitting behind him. I tell him she is older than he is, and has a big nose, and a moustache.

He says,’ Jonas says, ‘that she is only a year older, which puts her shading forty, and that a big horn indicates character, and a moustache is good luck.

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

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

‘Yes,’ Jonas says, ‘I am going to marry Miss Margie Grogan. We fix it up on the ship.’ Then all of a sudden Poltafuss jumps up and says to Margie in English like this: ‘Why,’ he says, ‘the idea is ridiculous. He cannot marry you. He is of royal blood. You are of common stock,’ he says. ‘Look, Jonas,’ Margie says, ‘are you going to stand here and hear me insulted? If you are, I am leaving right now,’ she says. Then she starts for the door, and Jonas runs after her and grabs her by the arm and says:

‘But, Margie,’ he says, ‘what can I do?’

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

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

And with this he walks over to Poltafuss; but old Polty

hears what Margie says, and as Jonas gets near him, he lets go a big right hand that starts down around China and bangs Jonas on the chin, and Jonas goes down.

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

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

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

'You are a liar,' Margie says.

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

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

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

Pretty soon Jonas's left-hand sticking has Poltafuss's nose bleeding and then one eye begins to close, and I find myself getting very much interested, because I now see what I am

looking for all my life, which is a dead game heavy-weight, and I can see that I will no longer have to be worrying about who I put Jonas in with. I see the next heavy-weight champion of the world as sure as I am standing there, and I now begin coaching Jonas in person.

‘Downstairs, Jonas,’ I say. ‘In the elly-bay, Jonas,’ I say. So Jonas hits Poltafuss a left hook in the stomach, and Polty goes oof.

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

The next thing I know, Margie is in Jonas’s arms, dabbing at his bloody face with a little handkerchief, and shedding tears, and a member of the cabinet that I afterward learn is the secretary of war is at one of the windows yelling down to the natives in the square and they are yelling back at him, and later someone tells me that what he yells is that the king just flattens Poltafuss and what they are yelling back is long live the king.

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

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

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

And this is the way it turns out [Spider says] and Jonas and Poltafuss get along very nicely indeed together afterward, except once at a cabinet meeting when King Jonas has to

flatten Poltafuss again to make him agree to some unemployment measure.

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

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

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

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Bred for Battle

One night a guy by the name of Bill Corum, who is one of these sport scribes, gives me a Chinee for a fight at Madison Square Garden, a Chinee being a ducket with holes punched in it like old-fashioned Chink money, to show that it is a free ducket, and the reason I am explaining to you how I get this ducket is because I do not wish anybody to think I am ever simple enough to pay out my own potatoes for a ducket to a fight, even if I have any potatoes.

Personally, I will not give you a bad two-bit piece to see a fight anywhere, because the way I look at it, half the time the guys who are supposed to do the fighting go in there and put on the old do-se-do, and I consider this a great fraud upon the public, and I do not believe in encouraging dishonesty.

But of course I never refuse a Chinee to such events, because the way I figure it, what can I lose except my time, and my time is not worth more than a bob a week the way things are. So on the night in question I am standing in the lobby of the Garden with many other citizens, and I am trying to find out if there is any skullduggery doing in connection with the fight, because any time there is any skullduggery doing I love to know it, as it is something worth knowing in case a guy wishes to get a small wager down.

Well, while I am standing there, somebody comes up behind me and hits me an awful belt on the back, knocking my wind plumb out of me, and making me very indignant indeed. As soon as I get a little of my wind back again, I turn around figuring to put a large blast on the guy who slaps me, but who is it but a guy by the name of Spider McCoy, who is

known far and wide as a manager of fighters.

Well, of course I do not put the blast on Spider McCoy, because he is an old friend of mine, and furthermore, Spider McCoy is such a guy as is apt to let a left hook go at anybody who puts the blast on him, and I do not believe in getting in trouble, especially with good left-hookers.

So I say hello to Spider, and am willing to let it go at that, but Spider seems glad to see me, and says to me like this:

‘Well, well, well, well, well!’ Spider says.

‘Well,’ I say to Spider McCoy, ‘how many wells does it take to make a river?’

‘One, if it is big enough,’ Spider says, so I can see he knows the answer all right. ‘Listen,’ he says, ‘I just think up the greatest proposition I ever think of in my whole life, and who knows but what I can interest you in same.’

‘Well, Spider,’ I say, ‘I do not care to hear any propositions at this time, because it may be a long story, and I wish to step inside and see the impending battle. Anyway,’ I say, ‘if it is a proposition involving financial support, I wish to state that I do not have any resources whatever at this time.’

‘Never mind the battle inside,’ Spider says. ‘It is nothing but a tank job, anyway. And as for financial support,’ Spider says, ‘this does not require more than a pound note, tops, and I know you have a pound note because I know you put the bite on Overcoat Obie for this amount not an hour ago. Listen,’ Spider McCoy says, ‘I know where I can place my hands on the greatest heavy-weight prospect in the world to-day, and all I need is the price of car-fare to where he is.’

Well, off and on, I know Spider McCoy twenty years, and in all this time I never know him when he is not looking for the greatest heavy-weight prospect in the world. And as long as Spider knows I have the pound note, I know there is no use trying to play the duck for him, so I stand there wondering who the stool pigeon can be who informs him of my financial status.

'Listen,' Spider says, 'I just discover that I am all out of line in the way I am looking for heavy-weight prospects in the past. I am always looking for nothing but plenty of size,' he says. 'Where I make my mistake is not looking for blood lines. Professor D just smartens me up,' Spider says.

Well, when he mentions the name of Professor D, I commence taking a little interest, because it is well known to one and all that Professor D is one of the smartest old guys in the world. He is once a professor in a college out in Ohio, but quits this dodge to handicap the horses, and he is a first-rate handicapper, at that. But besides knowing how to handicap the horses, Professor D knows many other things, and is highly respected in all walks of life, especially on Broadway.

'Now then,' Spider says, 'Professor D calls my attention this afternoon to the fact that when a guy is looking for a race horse, he does not take just any horse that comes along, but he finds out if the horse's papa is able to run in his day, and if the horse's mamma can get out of her own way when she is young. Professor D shows me how a guy looks for speed in a horse's breeding away back to its great-great-great-great-grandpa and grand-mamma,' Spider McCoy says.

'Well,' I say, 'anybody knows this without asking Professor D. In fact,' I say, 'you even look up a horse's parents to see if they can mud before betting on a plug to win in heavy going.'

'All right,' Spider says, 'I know all this myself, but I never think much about it before Professor D mentions it. Professor D says if a guy is looking for a hunting dog he does not pick a Pekinese pooch, but he gets a dog that is bred to hunt from away back yonder, and if he is after a game chicken he does not take a Plymouth Rock out of the back-yard.

'So then,' Spider says, 'Professor D wishes to know if when I am looking for a fighter, if I do not look for one who comes of fighting stock. Professor D wishes to know,' Spider says, 'why I do not look for some guy who is bred to fight, and when I think this over, I can see the professor is right.

‘And then all of a sudden,’ Spider says, ‘I get the largest idea I ever have in all my life. Do you remember a guy I have about twenty years back by the name of Shamus Mulrooney, the Fighting Harp?’ Spider says. ‘A big, rough, tough heavy-weight out of Newark?’

‘Yes,’ I say, ‘I remember Shamus very well indeed. The last time I see him is the night Pounder Pat O’Shea almost murders him in the old Garden,’ I say. ‘I never see a guy with more ticker than Shamus, unless maybe it is Pat.’

‘Yes,’ Spider says, ‘Shamus has plenty of ticker. He is about through the night of the fight you speak of, otherwise Pat will never lay a glove on him. It is not long after this fight that Shamus packs in and goes back to brick-laying in Newark, and it is also about this same time,’ Spider says, ‘that he marries Pat O’Shea’s sister, Bridget.’

‘Well, now,’ Spider says, ‘I remember they have a boy who must be around nineteen years old now, and if ever a guy is bred to fight it is a boy by Shamus Mulrooney out of Bridget O’Shea, because,’ Spider says, ‘Bridget herself can lick half the heavy-weights I see around nowadays if she is half as good as she is the last time I see her. So now you have my wonderful idea. We will go to Newark and get this boy and make him heavy-weight champion of the world.’

‘What you state is very interesting indeed, Spider,’ I say. ‘But,’ I say, ‘how do you know this boy is a heavy-weight?’

‘Why,’ Spider says, ‘how can he be anything else but a heavy-weight, what with his papa as big as a house, and his mamma weighing maybe a hundred and seventy pounds in her step-ins? Although of course,’ Spider says, ‘I never see Bridget weigh in in such manner.’

‘But,’ Spider says, ‘even if she does carry more weight than I will personally care to spot a doll, Bridget is by no means a pelican when she marries Shamus. In fact,’ he says, ‘she is pretty good-looking. I remember their wedding well, because it comes out that Bridget is in love with some other guy at the

time, and this guy comes to see the nuptials, and Shamus runs him all the way from Newark to Elizabeth, figuring to break a couple of legs for the guy if he catches him. But,' Spider says, 'the guy is too speedy for Shamus, who never has much foot anyway.'

Well, all that Spider says appeals to me as a very sound business proposition, so the upshot of it is I give him my pound note to finance his trip to Newark.

Then I do not see Spider McCoy again for a week, but one day he calls me up and tells me to hurry over to the Pioneer gymnasium to see the next heavy-weight champion of the world, Thunderbolt Mulrooney.

I am personally somewhat disappointed when I see Thunderbolt Mulrooney, and especially when I find out his first name is Raymond and not Thunderbolt at all, because I am expecting to see a big, fierce guy with red hair and a chest like a barrel, such as Shamus Mulrooney has when he is in his prime. But who do I see but a tall, pale-looking young guy with blond hair and thin legs.

Furthermore, he has pale blue eyes, and a far-away look in them, and he speaks in a low voice, which is nothing like the voice of Shamus Mulrooney. But Spider seems satisfied with Thunderbolt, and when I tell him Thunderbolt does not look to me like the next heavy-weight champion of the world, Spider says like this:

'Why,' he says, 'the guy is nothing but a baby, and you must give him time to fill out. He may grow to be bigger than his papa. But you know,' Spider says, getting indignant as he thinks about it, 'Bridget Mulrooney does not wish to let this guy be the next heavy-weight champion of the world. In fact,' Spider says, 'she kicks up an awful row when I go to get him, and Shamus finally has to speak to her severely. Shamus says he does not know if I can ever make a fighter of this guy because Bridget coddles him until he is nothing but a mush-head, and Shamus says he is sick and tired of seeing the guy

sitting around the house doing nothing but reading and playing the zither.'

'Does he play the zither yet?' I ask Spider McCoy.

'No,' Spider says, 'I do not allow my fighters to play zithers. I figure it softens them up. This guy does not play anything at present. He seems to be in a daze most of the time, but of course everything is new to him. He is bound to come out okay, because,' Spider says, 'he is certainly bred right. I find out from Shamus that all the Mulrooneys are great fighters back in the old country,' Spider says, 'and furthermore he tells me Bridget's mother once licks four Newark cops who try to stop her from pasting her old man, so,' Spider says, 'this lad is just naturally steaming with fighting blood.'

Well, I drop around to the Pioneer once or twice a week after this, and Spider McCoy is certainly working hard with Thunderbolt Mulrooney. Furthermore, the guy seems to be improving right along, and gets so he can box fairly well and punch the bag, and all this and that, but he always has that far-away look in his eyes, and personally I do not care for fighters with far-away looks.

Finally one day Spider calls me up and tells me he has Thunderbolt Mulrooney matched in a four-round preliminary bout at the St. Nick with a guy by the name of Bubbles Browning, who is fighting almost as far back as the first battle of Bull Run, so I can see Spider is being very careful in matching Thunderbolt. In fact I congratulate Spider on his carefulness.

'Well,' Spider says, 'I am taking this match just to give Thunderbolt the feel of the ring. I am taking Bubbles because he is an old friend of mine, and very deserving, and furthermore,' Spider says, 'he gives me his word he will not hit Thunderbolt very hard and will become unconscious the instant Thunderbolt hits him. You know,' Spider says, 'you must encourage a young heavy-weight, and there is nothing that encourages one so much as knocking somebody unconscious.'

Now of course it is nothing for Bubbles to promise not to hit anybody very hard because even when he is a young guy, Bubbles cannot punch his way out of a paper bag, but I am glad to learn that he also promises to become unconscious very soon, as naturally I am greatly interested in Thunderbolt's career, what with owning a piece of him, and having an investment of one pound in him already.

So the night of the fight, I am at the St. Nick very early, and many other citizens are there ahead of me, because by this time Spider McCoy gets plenty of publicity for Thunderbolt by telling the boxing scribes about his wonderful fighting blood lines, and everybody wishes to see a guy who is bred for battle, like Thunderbolt.

I take a guest with me to the fight by the name of Harry the Horse, who comes from Brooklyn, and as I am anxious to help Spider McCoy all I can, as well as to protect my investment in Thunderbolt, I request Harry to call on Bubbles Browning in his dressing-room and remind him of his promise about hitting Thunderbolt.

Harry the Horse does this for me, and furthermore he shows Bubbles a large revolver and tells Bubbles that he will be compelled to shoot his ears off if Bubbles forgets his promise, but Bubbles says all this is most unnecessary, as his eyesight is so bad he cannot see to hit anybody, anyway.

Well, I know a party who is a friend of the guy who is going to referee the preliminary bouts, and I am looking for this party to get him to tell the referee to disqualify Bubbles in case it looks as if he is forgetting his promise and is liable to hit Thunderbolt, but before I can locate the party, they are announcing the opening bout, and there is Thunderbolt in the ring looking very far away indeed, with Spider McCoy behind him.

It seems to me I never see a guy who is so pale all over as Thunderbolt Mulrooney, but Spider looks down at me and tips me a large wink, so I can see that everything is as right as rain,

especially when Harry the Horse makes motions at Bubbles Browning like a guy firing a large revolver at somebody, and Bubbles smiles, and also winks.

Well, when the bell rings, Spider gives Thunderbolt a shove towards the centre, and Thunderbolt comes out with his hands up, but looking more far away than somewhat, and something tells me that Thunderbolt by no means feels the killer instinct such as I love to see in fighters. In fact, something tells me that Thunderbolt is not feeling enthusiastic about this proposition in any way, shape, manner, or form.

Old Bubbles almost falls over his own feet coming out of his corner, and he starts bouncing around making passes at Thunderbolt, and waiting for Thunderbolt to hit him so he can become unconscious. Naturally, Bubbles does not wish to become unconscious without getting hit, as this may look suspicious to the public.

Well, instead of hitting Bubbles, what does Thunderbolt Mulrooney do but turn around and walk over to a neutral corner, and lean over the ropes with his face in his gloves, and bust out crying. Naturally, this is a most surprising incident to one and all, and especially to Bubbles Browning.

The referee walks over to Thunderbolt Mulrooney and tries to turn him around, but Thunderbolt keeps his face in his gloves and sobs so loud that the referee is deeply touched and starts sobbing with him. Between the sobs he asks Thunderbolt if he wishes to continue the fight, and Thunderbolt shakes his head, although as a matter of fact no fight whatever starts so far, so the referee declares Bubbles Browning the winner, which is a terrible surprise to Bubbles.

Then the referee puts his arm around Thunderbolt and leads him over to Spider McCoy, who is standing in his corner with a very strange expression on his face. Personally, I consider the entire spectacle so revolting that I go out into the air, and stand around a while expecting to hear any minute that Spider McCoy is in the hands of the gendarmes on a

charge of mayhem.

But it seems that nothing happens, and when Spider finally comes out of the St. Nick, he is only looking sorrowful because he just hears that the promoter declines to pay him the fifty bobs he is supposed to receive for Thunderbolt's services, the promoter claiming that Thunderbolt renders no service.

'Well,' Spider says, 'I fear this is not the next heavy-weight champion of the world after all. There is nothing in Professor D's idea about blood lines as far as fighters are concerned, although,' he says, 'it may work out all right with horses and dogs, and one thing and another. I am greatly disappointed,' Spider says, 'but then I am always being disappointed in heavy-weights. There is nothing we can do but take this guy back home, because,' Spider says, 'the last thing I promise Bridget Mulrooney is that I will personally return him to her in case I am not able to make him heavy-weight champion, as she is afraid he will get lost if he tries to find his way home alone.'

So the next day, Spider McCoy and I take Thunderbolt Mulrooney over to Newark and to his home, which turns out to be a nice little house in a side street with a yard all round and about, and Spider and I are just as well pleased that old Shamus Mulrooney is absent when we arrive, because Spider says that Shamus is just such a guy as will be asking a lot of questions about the fifty bobbos that Thunderbolt does not get.

Well, when we reach the front door of the house, out comes a big, fine-looking doll with red cheeks, all excited, and she takes Thunderbolt in her arms and kisses him, so I know this is Bridget Mulrooney, and I can see she knows what happens, and in fact I afterward learn that Thunderbolt telephones her the night before.

After a while she pushes Thunderbolt into the house and stands at the door as if she is guarding it against us entering to get him again, which of course is very unnecessary. And all

this time Thunderbolt is sobbing no little, although by and by the sobs die away, and from somewhere in the house comes the sound of music I seem to recognize as the music of a zither.

Well, Bridget Mulrooney never says a word to us as she stands in the door, and Spider McCoy keeps staring at her in a way that I consider very rude indeed. I am wondering if he is waiting for a receipt for Thunderbolt, but finally he speaks as follows:

‘Bridget,’ Spider says, ‘I hope and trust that you will not consider me too fresh, but I wish to learn the name of the guy you are going around with just before you marry Shamus. I remember him well,’ Spider says, ‘but I cannot think of his name, and it bothers me not being able to think of names. He is a tall, skinny, stoop-shouldered guy,’ Spider says, ‘with a hollow chest and a soft voice, and he loves music.’

Well, Bridget Mulrooney stands there in the doorway, staring back at Spider, and it seems to me that the red suddenly fades out of her cheeks, and just then we hear a lot of yelling, and around the corner of the house comes a bunch of five or six kids, who seem to be running from another kid.

This kid is not very big, and is maybe fifteen or sixteen years old, and he has red hair and many freckles, and he seems very mad at the other kids. In fact, when he catches up with them he starts belting away at them with his fists and before anybody can as much as say boo, he has three of them on the ground as flat as pancakes, while the others are yelling bloody murder.

Personally, I never see such wonderful punching by a kid, especially with his left hand, and Spider McCoy is also much impressed, and is watching the kid with great interest. Then Bridget Mulrooney runs out and grabs the freckle-faced kid with one hand and smacks him with the other hand and hauls him, squirming and kicking, over to Spider McCoy and says to Spider like this:

‘Mr. McCoy,’ Bridget says, ‘this is my youngest son, Terence,

and though he is not a heavy-weight, and will never be a heavy-weight, perhaps he will answer your purpose. Suppose you see his father about him sometime,' she says, 'and hoping you will learn to mind your own business, I wish you a very good day.'

Then she takes the kid into the house under her arm and slams the door in our kissers, and there is nothing for us to do but walk away. And as we are walking away, all of a sudden Spider McCoy snaps his fingers as guys will do when they get an unexpected thought, and says like this:

'I remember the guy's name,' he says. 'It is Cedric Tilbury, and he is a floor-walker in Hamburgher's department store, and,' Spider says, 'how he can play the zither!'

I see in the papers the other day where Jimmy Johnston, the match-maker at the Garden, matches Tearing Terry Mulrooney, the new sensation of the light-weight division, to fight for the championship, but it seems from what Spider McCoy tells me that my investment with him does not cover any fighters in his stable except maybe heavy-weights.

And it also seems that Spider McCoy is not monkeying with heavy-weights since he gets Tearing Terry.

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A Piece of Pie

On Boylston Street, in the city of Boston, Mass., there is a joint where you can get as nice a broiled lobster as anybody ever slaps a lip over, and who is in there one evening partaking of this tidbit but a character by the name of Horse Thief and me.

This Horse Thief is called Horsey for short, and he is not called by this name because he ever steals a horse but because it is the consensus of public opinion from coast to coast that he may steal one if the opportunity presents.

Personally, I consider Horsey a very fine character, because any time he is holding anything he is willing to share his good fortune with one and all, and at this time in Boston he is holding plenty. It is the time we make the race meeting at Suffolk Downs, and Horsey gets to going very good, indeed, and in fact he is now a character of means, and is my host against the broiled lobster.

Well, at a table next to us are four or five characters who all seem to be well-dressed, and stout-set, and red-faced, and prosperous-looking, and who all speak with the true Boston accent, which consists of many ah's and very few r's. Characters such as these are familiar to anybody who is ever in Boston very much, and they are bound to be politicians, retired cops, or contractors, because Boston is really quite infested with characters of this nature.

I am paying no attention to them, because they are drinking local ale, and talking loud, and long ago I learn that when a Boston character is engaged in aleing himself up, it is a good idea to let him alone, because the best you can get out of

him is maybe a boff on the beezer. But Horsey is in there on the old Ear-ie, and very much interested in their conversation, and finally I listen myself just to hear what is attracting his attention, when one of the characters speaks as follows:

‘Well,’ he says, ‘I am willing to bet ten thousand dollars that he can outeat anybody in the United States any time.’

Now at this. Horsey gets right up and steps over to the table and bows and smiles in a friendly way on one and all, and says:

‘Gentlemen,’ he says, ‘pardon the intrusion, and excuse me for billing in, but,’ he says, ‘do I understand you are speaking of a great eater who resides in your fair city?’

Well, these Boston characters all gaze at Horsey in such a hostile manner that I am expecting any one of them to get up and request him to let them miss him, but he keeps on bowing and smiling, and they can see that he is a gentleman, and finally one of them says:

‘Yes,’ he says, ‘we are speaking of a character by the name of Joel Duffle. He is without doubt the greatest eater alive. He just wins a unique wager. He bets a character from Bangor, Me., that he can eat a whole window display of oysters in this very restaurant, and he not only eats all the oysters but he then wishes to wager that he can also eat the shells, but,’ he says, ‘it seems that the character from Bangor, Me., unfortunately taps out on the first proposition and has nothing with which to bet on the second.’

‘Very interesting,’ Horsey says. ‘Very interesting, if true, but,’ he says, ‘unless my ears deceive me, I hear one of you state that he is willing to wager ten thousand dollars on this eater of yours against anybody in the United States.’

‘Your ears are perfect,’ another of the Boston characters says. ‘I state it, although,’ he says, ‘I admit it is a sort of figure of speech. But I state it all right,’ he says, ‘and never let it be said that a Conway ever pigs it on a betting proposition.’

‘Well,’ Horsey says, ‘I do not have a tenner on me at the

moment, but,' he says, 'I have here a thousand dollars to put up as a forfeit that I can produce a character who will outeat your party for ten thousand, and as much more as you care to put up.' And with this. Horsey outs with a bundle of coarse notes and tosses it on the table, and right away one of the Boston characters, whose name turns out to be Carroll, slaps his hand on the money and says:

'Bet.'

Well, now this is prompt action to be sure, and if there is one thing I admire more than anything else, it is action, and I can see that these are characters of true sporting instincts and I commence wondering where I can raise a few dibs to take a piece of Horsey's proposition, because of course I know that he has nobody in mind to do the eating for his side but Nicely-Nicely Jones.

And knowing Nicely-Nicely Jones, I am prepared to wager all the money I can possibly raise that he can outeat anything that walks on two legs. In fact, I will take a chance on Nicely-Nicely against anything on four legs, except maybe an elephant, and at that he may give the elephant a photo finish.

I do not say that Nicely-Nicely is the greatest eater in all history, but what I do say is he belongs up there as a contender. In fact. Professor D., who is a professor in a college out West before he turns to playing the horses for a livelihood, and who makes a study of history in his time, says he will not be surprised but what Nicely-Nicely figures one-two.

Professor D. says we must always remember that Nicely-Nicely eats under the handicaps of modern civilization, which require that an eater use a knife and fork, or anyway a knife, while in the old days eating with the hands was a popular custom and much faster. Professor D. says he has no doubt that under the old rules Nicely-Nicely will hang up a record that will endure through the ages, but of course maybe Professor D. overlays Nicely-Nicely somewhat.

Well, now that the match is agreed upon, naturally Horsey

and the Boston characters begin discussing where it is to take place, and one of the Boston characters suggests a neutral ground, such as New London, Conn., or Providence, R. I., but Horsey holds out for New York, and it seems that Boston characters are always ready to visit New York, so he does not meet with any great opposition on this point.

They all agree on a date four weeks later so as to give the principals plenty of time to get ready, although Horsey and I know that this is really unnecessary as far as Nicely-Nicely is concerned, because one thing about him is he is always in condition to eat.

Nicely-Nicely is called by this name because any time anybody asks him how he feels, or how he is doing, he always says nicely, nicely, and the consequence is he goes through life a constant perjurer, at least on how he is doing. He is a character who is maybe five feet eight inches tall, and about five feet nine inches wide, and when he is in good shape he will weigh upward of 283 pounds. He is a horse player by trade, and eating is really just a hobby, but he is undoubtedly a wonderful eater even when he is not hungry.

Well, as soon as Horsey and I return to New York, we hasten to Mindy's restaurant on Broadway and relate the bet Horsey makes in Boston, and right away so many citizens, including Mindy himself, wish to take a piece of the proposition that it is oversubscribed by a large sum in no time.

Then Mindy remarks that he does not see Nicely-Nicely Jones for a month of Sundays, and then everybody present remembers that they do not see Nicely-Nicely around lately, either, and this leads to a discussion of where Nicely-Nicely can be, although up to this moment if nobody sees Nicely-Nicely but once in the next ten years it will be considered sufficient.

Well, Willie the Worrier, who is a bookmaker by trade, is among those present, and he remembers that the last time he looks for Nicely-Nicely hoping to collect a marker of some

years standing, Nicely-Nicely is living at the Rest Hotel in West 49th Street, and nothing will do Horsey but I must go with him over to the Rest to make inquiry for Nicely-Nicely, and there we learn that he leaves a forwarding address away up on Morningside Heights in care of somebody by the name of Slocum.

So Horsey calls a short, and away we go to this address, which turns out to be a five-story walk-up apartment, and a card downstairs shows that Slocum lives on the top floor. It takes Horsey and me ten minutes to walk up the five flights as we are by no means accustomed to exercise of this nature, and when we finally reach a door marked Slocum, we are plumb tuckered out, and have to sit down on the top step and rest awhile.

Then I ring the bell at this door marked Slocum, and who appears but a tall young Judy with black hair who is without doubt beautiful, but who is so skinny we have to look twice to see her, and when I ask her if she can give me any information about a party named Nicely-Nicely Jones, she says to me like this:

‘I guess you mean Quentin,’ she says. ‘Yes,’ she says, ‘Quentin is here. Come in, gentlemen.’

So we step into an apartment, and as we do so a thin, sickly-looking character gets up out of a chair by the window, and in a weak voice says good evening. It is a good evening, at that, so Horsey and I say good evening right back at him, very polite, and then we stand there waiting for Nicely-Nicely to appear, when the beautiful skinny young Judy says:

‘Well,’ she says, ‘this is Mr. Quentin Jones.’

Then Horsey and I take another swivel at the thin character, and we can see that it is nobody but Nicely-Nicely, at that, but the way he changes since we last observe him is practically shocking to us both, because he is undoubtedly all shrunk up. In fact, he looks as if he is about half what he is in his prime, and his face is pale and thin, and his eyes are away

back in his head, and while we both shake hands with him it is some time before either of us is able to speak. Then Horsey finally says:

‘Nicely,’ he says, ‘can we have a few words with you in private on a very important proposition.’

Well, at this, and before Nicely-Nicely can answer aye, yes or no, the beautiful skinny young Judy goes out of the room and slams a door behind her, and Nicely-Nicely says:

‘My fiancée, Miss Hilda Slocum,’ he says. ‘She is a wonderful character. We are to be married as soon as I lose twenty pounds more. It will take a couple of weeks longer,’ he says.

‘My goodness gracious. Nicely,’ Horsey says. ‘What do you mean lose twenty pounds more? You are practically emaciated now. Are you just out of a sick bed, or what?’

‘Why,’ Nicely-Nicely says, ‘certainly I am not out of a sick bed. I am never healthier in my life. I am on a diet. I lose eighty-three pounds in two months, and am now down to 200. I feel great,’ he says. ‘It is all because of my fiancée, Miss Hilda Slocum. She rescues me from gluttony and obesity, or anyway,’ Nicely-Nicely says, ‘this is what Miss Hilda Slocum calls it. My, I feel good. I love Miss Hilda Slocum very much,’ Nicely-Nicely says. ‘It is a case of love at first sight on both sides the day we meet in the subway. I am wedged in one of the turnstile gates, and she kindly pushes on me from behind until I wiggle through. I can see she has a kind heart, so I date her up for a movie that night and propose to her while the newsreel is on. But,’ Nicely-Nicely says, ‘Hilda tells me at once that she will never marry a fat slob. She says I must put myself in her hands and she will reduce me by scientific methods and then she will become my ever-loving wife, but not before.’

‘So,’ Nicely-Nicely says, ‘I come to live here with Miss Hilda Slocum and her mother, so she can supervise my diet. Her mother is thinner than Hilda. And I surely feel great,’ Nicely-

Nicely says. 'Look,' he says.

And with this, he pulls out the waistband of his pants, and shows enough spare space to hide War Admiral in, but the effort seems to be a strain on him, and he has to sit down in his chair again.

'My goodness gracious,' Horsey says. 'What do you eat, Nicely?'

'Well,' Nicely-Nicely says, 'I eat anything that does not contain starch, but,' he says, 'of course everything worth eating contains starch, so I really do not eat much of anything whatever. My fiancée, Miss Hilda Slocum, arranges my diet. She is an expert dietitian and runs a widely known department on diet in a magazine by the name of Let's Keep House.'

Then Horsey tells Nicely-Nicely of how he is matched to eat against this Joel Duffle, of Boston, for a nice side bet, and how he has a forfeit of a thousand dollars already posted for appearance, and how many of Nicely-Nicely's admirers along Broadway are looking to win themselves out of all their troubles by betting on him, and at first Nicely-Nicely listens with great interest, and his eyes are shining like six bits, but then he becomes very sad, and says:

'It is no use, gentlemen,' he says. 'My fiancée, Miss Hilda Slocum, will never hear of me going off my diet even for a little while. Only yesterday I try to talk her into letting me have a little pumpernickel instead of toasted whole wheat bread, and she says if I even think of such a thing again, she will break our engagement. Horsey,' he says, 'do you ever eat toasted whole-wheat bread for a month hand running? Toasted?' he says.

'No,' Horsey says. 'What I eat is nice, white French bread, and corn muffins, and hot biscuits with gravy on them.'

'Stop,' Nicely-Nicely says. 'You are eating yourself into an early grave, and, furthermore,' he says, 'you are breaking my heart. But,' he says, 'the more I think of my following depending on me in this emergency, the sadder it makes me

feel to think I am unable to oblige them. However,' he says, 'let us call Miss Hilda Slocum in on an outside chance and see what her reactions to your proposition are.'

So we call Miss Hilda Slocum in, and Horsey explains our predicament in putting so much faith in Nicely-Nicely only to find him dieting, and Miss Hilda Slocum's reactions are to order Horsey and me out of the joint with instructions never to darken her door again, and when we are a block away we can still hear her voice speaking very firmly to Nicely-Nicely.

Well, personally, I figure this ends the matter, for I can see that Miss Hilda Slocum is a most determined character, indeed, and the chances are it does end it, at that, if Horsey does not happen to get a wonderful break.

He is at Belmont Park one afternoon, and he has a real good thing in a jump race, and when a brisk young character in a hard straw hat and eyeglasses comes along and asks him what he likes. Horsey mentions this good thing, figuring he will move himself in for a few dibs if the good thing connects.

Well, it connects all right, and the brisk young character is very grateful to Horsey for his information, and is giving him plenty of much-obliges, and nothing else, and Horsey is about to mention that they do not accept much-obliges at his hotel, when the brisk young character mentions that he is nobody but Mr. McBurgle and that he is the editor of the Let's Keep House magazine, and for Horsey to drop in and see him any time he is around his way.

Naturally, Horsey remembers what Nicely-Nicely says about Miss Hilda Slocum working for this Let's Keep House magazine, and he relates the story of the eating contest to Mr. McBurgle and asks him if he will kindly use his influence with Miss Hilda Slocum to get her to release Nicely-Nicely from his diet long enough for the contest. Then Horsey gives Mr. McBurgle a tip on another winner, and Mr. McBurgle must use plenty of influence on Miss Hilda Slocum at once, as the next day she calls Horsey up at his hotel before he is out of bed, and

speaks to him as follows:

‘Of course,’ Miss Hilda Slocum says, ‘I will never change my attitude about Quentin, but,’ she says, ‘I can appreciate that he feels very bad about you gentlemen relying on him and having to disappoint you. He feels that he lets you down, which is by no means true, but it weighs upon his mind. It is interfering with his diet.’

‘Now,’ Miss Hilda Slocum says, ‘I do not approve of your contest, because,’ she says, ‘it is placing a premium on gluttony, but I have a friend by the name of Miss Violette Shumberger who may answer your purpose. She is my dearest friend from childhood, but it is only because I love her dearly that this friendship endures. She is extremely fond of eating,’ Miss Hilda Slocum says. ‘In spite of my pleadings, and my warnings, and my own example, she persists in food. It is disgusting to me but I finally learn that it is no use arguing with her.’

‘She remains my dearest friend,’ Miss Hilda Slocum says, ‘though she continues her practice of eating, and I am informed that she is phenomenal in this respect. In fact,’ she says, ‘Nicely-Nicely tells me to say to you that if Miss Violette Shumberger can perform the eating exploits I relate to him from hearsay she is a lily. Goodbye,’ Miss Hilda Slocum says. ‘You cannot have Nicely-Nicely.’

Well, nobody cares much about this idea of a stand-in for Nicely-Nicely in such a situation, and especially a Judy that no one ever hears of before, and many citizens are in favor of pulling out of the contest altogether. But Horsey has his thousand-dollar forfeit to think of, and as no one can suggest anyone else, he finally arranges a personal meet with the Judy suggested by Miss Hilda Slocum.

He comes into Mindy’s one evening with a female character who is so fat it is necessary to push three tables together to give her room for her lap, and it seems that this character is Miss Violette Shumberger. She weighs maybe 250

pounds, but she is by no means an old Judy, and by no means bad-looking. She has a face the size of a town clock and enough chins for a fire escape, but she has a nice smile, and pretty teeth, and a laugh that is so hearty it knocks the whipped cream off an order of strawberry shortcake on a table fifty feet away and arouses the indignation of a customer by the name of Goldstein who is about to consume same.

Well, Horsey's idea in bringing her into Mindy's is to get some kind of line on her eating form, and she is clocked by many experts when she starts putting on the hot meat, and it is agreed by one and all that she is by no means a selling-plater. In fact, by the time she gets through, even Mindy admits she has plenty of class, and the upshot of it all is Miss Violette Shumberger is chosen to eat against Joel Duffle. Maybe you hear something of this great eating contest that comes off in New York one night in the early summer of 1937. Of course eating contests are by no means anything new, and in fact they are quite an old-fashioned pastime in some sections of this country, such as the South and East, but this is the first big public contest of the kind in years, and it creates no little comment along Broadway.

In fact, there is some mention of it in the blats, and it is not a frivolous proposition in any respect, and more dough is wagered on it than any other eating contest in history, with Joel Duffle a 6 to 5 favorite over Miss Violette Shumberger all the way through.

This Joel Duffle comes to New York several days before the contest with the character by the name of Conway, and requests a meet with Miss Violette Shumberger to agree on the final details and who shows up with Miss Violette Shumberger as her coach and adviser but Nicely-Nicely Jones. He is even thinner and more peaked-looking than when Horsey and I see him last, but he says he feels great, and that he is within six pounds of his marriage to Miss Hilda Slocum.

Well, it seems that his presence is really due to Miss Hilda

Slocum herself, because she says that after getting her dearest friend Miss Violette Shumberger into this jack-pot, it is only fair to do all she can to help her win it, and the only way she can think of is to let Nicely-Nicely give Violette the benefit of his experience and advice.

But afterward we learn that what really happens is that this editor, Mr. McBurgle, gets greatly interested in the contest, and when he discovers that in spite of his influence. Miss Hilda Slocum declines to permit Nicely-Nicely to personally compete, but puts in a pinch eater, he is quite indignant and insists on her letting Nicely-Nicely school Violette.

Furthermore we afterward learn that when Nicely-Nicely returns to the apartment on Morningside Heights after giving Violette a lesson, Miss Hilda Slocum always smells his breath to see if he indulges in any food during his absence.

Well, this Joel Duffle is a tall character with stooped shoulders, and a sad expression, and he does not look as if he can eat his way out of a tea shoppe, but as soon as he commences to discuss the details of the contest, anybody can see that he knows what time it is in situations such as this. In fact, Nicely-Nicely says he can tell at once from the way Joel Duffle talks that he is a dangerous opponent, and he says while Miss Violette Shumberger impresses him as an improving eater, he is only sorry she does not have more seasoning.

This Joel Duffle suggests that the contest consist of twelve courses of strictly American food, each side to be allowed to pick six dishes, doing the picking in rotation, and specifying the weight and quantity of the course selected to any amount the contestant making the pick desires, and each course is to be divided for eating exactly in half, and after Miss Violette Shumberger and Nicely-Nicely whisper together a while, they say the terms are quite satisfactory.

Then Horsey tosses a coin for the first pick, and Joel Duffle says heads, and it is heads, and he chooses, as the first course, two quarts of ripe olives, twelve bunches of celery, and four

pounds of shelled nuts, all this to be split fifty-fifty between them. Miss Violette Shumberger names twelve dozen cherry-stone clams as the second course, and Joe Duffle says two gallons of Philadelphia pepperpot soup as the third.

Well, Miss Violette Shumberger and Nicely-Nicely whisper together again, and Violette puts in two five-pound striped bass, the heads and tails not to count in the eating, and Joel Duffle names a twenty-two-pound roast turkey. Each vegetable is rated as one course, and Miss Violette Shumberger asks for twelve pounds of mashed potatoes with brown gravy. Joel Duffle says two dozen ears of corn on the cob, and Violette replies with two quarts of lima beans. Joel Duffle calls for twelve bunches of asparagus cooked in butter, and Violette mentions ten pounds of stewed new peas.

This gets them down to the salad, and it is Joel Duffle's play, so he says six pounds of mixed green salad with vinegar and oil dressing, and now Miss Violette Shumberger has the final selection, which is the dessert. She says it is a pumpkin pie, two feet across, and not less than three inches deep.

It is agreed that they must eat with knife, fork or spoon, but speed is not to count, and there is to be no time limit, except they cannot pause more than two consecutive minutes at any stage, except in case of hiccoughs. They can drink anything, and as much as they please, but liquids are not to count in the scoring. The decision is to be strictly on amount of food consumed, and the judges are to take account of anything left on the plates after a course, but not of loose chewings on bosom or vest up to an ounce. The losing side is to pay for the food, and in case of a tie they are to eat it off immediately on ham and eggs only.

Well, the scene of this contest is the second-floor dining room of Mindy's restaurant, which is closed to the general public for the occasion, and only parties immediately concerned in the contest are admitted. The contestants are seated on either side of a big table in the center of the room,

and each contestant has three waiters.

No talking, and no rooting from the spectators is permitted, but of course in any eating contest the principals may speak to each other if they wish, though smart eaters never wish to do this, as talking only wastes energy, and about all they ever say to each other is please pass the mustard.

About fifty characters from Boston are present to witness the contest, and the same number of citizens of New York are admitted, and among them is this editor, Mr. McBurple, and he is around asking Horsey if he thinks Miss Violette Shumberger is as good a thing as the jumper at the race track.

Nicely-Nicely arrives on the scene quite early, and his appearance is really most distressing to his old friends and admirers, as by this time he is shy so much weight that he is a pitiful scene, to be sure, but he tells Horsey and me that he thinks Miss Violette Shumberger has a good chance.

'Of course,' he says, 'she is green. She does not know how to pace herself in competition. But,' he says, 'she has a wonderful style. I love to watch her eat. She likes the same things I do in the days when I am eating. She is a wonderful character, too. Do you ever notice her smile?' Nicely-Nicely says.

'But,' he says, 'she is the dearest friend of my fiancée, Miss Hilda Slocum, so let us not speak of this. I try to get Hilda to come to see the contest, but she says it is repulsive. Well, anyway,' Nicely-Nicely says, 'I manage to borrow a few dibs, and am wagering on Miss Violette Shumberger. By the way,' he says, 'if you happen to think of it, notice her smile.'

Well, Nicely-Nicely takes a chair about ten feet behind Miss Violette Shumberger, which is as close as the judges will allow him, and he is warned by them that no coaching from the corners will be permitted, but of course Nicely-Nicely knows this rule as well as they do, and furthermore by this time his exertions seem to have left him without any more energy.

There are three judges, and they are all from neutral territory. One of these judges is a party from Baltimore, Md., by the name of Packard, who runs a restaurant, and another is a party from Providence, R. I., by the name of Croppers, who is a sausage manufacturer. The third judge is an old Judy by the name of Mrs. Rhubarb, who comes from Philadelphia, and once keeps an actors' boardinghouse, and is considered an excellent judge of eaters.

Well, Mindy is the official starter, and at 8:30 P. M. sharp, when there is still much betting among the spectators, he outs with his watch, and says like this:

'Are you ready, Boston? Are you ready, New York?'

Miss Violette Shumberger and Joel Duffle both nod their heads, and Mindy says commence, and the contest is on, with Joel Duffle getting the jump at once on the celery and olives and nuts.

It is apparent that this Joel Duffle is one of these rough-and-tumble eaters that you can hear quite a distance off, especially on clams and soups. He is also an eyebrow eater, an eater whose eyebrows go up as high as the part in his hair as he eats, and this type of eater is undoubtedly very efficient.

In fact, the way Joel Duffle goes through the groceries down to the turkey causes the Broadway spectators some uneasiness, and they are whispering to each other that they only wish the old Nicely-Nicely is in there. But personally, I like the way Miss Violette Shumberger eats without undue excitement, and with great zest. She cannot keep close to Joel Duffle in the matter of speed in the early stages of the contest, as she seems to enjoy chewing her food, but I observe that as it goes along she pulls up on him, and I figure this is not because she is stepping up her pace, but because he is slowing down.

When the turkey finally comes on, and is split in two halves right down the middle. Miss Violette Shumberger looks greatly disappointed, and she speaks for the first time as follows:

‘Why,’ she says, ‘where is the stuffing?’

Well, it seems that nobody mentions any stuffing for the turkey to the chef, so he does not make any stuffing, and Miss Violette Shumberger’s disappointment is so plain to be seen that the confidence of the Boston characters is somewhat shaken. They can see that a Judy who can pack away as much fodder as Miss Violette Shumberger has to date, and then beef for stuffing, is really quite an eater.

In fact, Joel Duffle looks quite startled when he observes Miss Violette Shumberger’s disappointment, and he gazes at her with great respect as she disposes of her share of the turkey, and the mashed potatoes, and one thing and another in such a manner that she moves up on the pumpkin pie on dead even terms with him. In fact, there is little to choose between them at this point, although the judge from Baltimore is calling the attention of the other judges to a turkey leg that he claims Miss Violette Shumberger does not clean as neatly as Joel Duffle does his, but the other judges dismiss this as a technicality.

Then the waiters bring on the pumpkin pie, and it is without doubt quite a large pie, and in fact it is about the size of a manhole cover, and I can see that Joel Duffle is observing this pie with a strange expression on his face, although to tell the truth I do not care for the expression on Miss Violette Shumberger’s face, either. Well, the pie is cut in two dead center, and one half is placed before Miss Violette Shumberger, and the other half before Joel Duffle, and he does not take more than two bites before I see him loosen his waistband and take a big swig of water, and thinks I to myself, he is now down to a slow walk, and the pie will decide the whole heat, and I am only wishing I am able to wager a little more dough on Miss Violette Shumberger. But about this moment, and before she as much as touches her pie, all of a sudden Violette turns her head and motions to Nicely-Nicely to approach her, and as he approaches, she whispers in his ear.

Now at this, the Boston character by the name of Conway jumps up and claims a foul, and several other Boston characters join him in this claim, and so does Joel Duffle, although afterwards even the Boston characters admit that Joel Duffle is no gentleman to make such a claim against a lady.

Well, there is some confusion over this, and the judges hold a conference, and they rule that there is certainly no foul in the actual eating that they can see, because Miss Violette Shumberger does not touch her pie so far.

But they say that whether it is a foul otherwise all depends on whether Miss Violette Shumberger is requesting advice on the contest from Nicely-Nicely and the judge from Providence, R. I., wishes to know if Nicely-Nicely will kindly relate what passes between him and Violette so they may make a decision.

‘Why,’ Nicely-Nicely says, ‘all she asks me is can I get her another piece of pie when she finishes the one in front of her.’

Now at this, Joel Duffle throws down his knife, and pushes back his plate with all but two bites of his pie left on it, and says to the Boston characters like this:

‘Gentlemen,’ he says, ‘I am licked. I cannot eat another mouthful. You must admit I put up a game battle, but,’ he says, ‘it is useless for me to go on against this Judy who is asking for more pie before she even starts on what is before her. I am almost dying as it is, and I do not wish to destroy myself in a hopeless effort. Gentlemen,’ he says, ‘she is not human.’

Well, of course this amounts to throwing in the old napkin and Nicely-Nicely stands up on his chair, and says:

‘Three cheers for Miss Violette Shumberger!’

Then Nicely-Nicely gives the first cheer in person, but the effort overtaxes his strength, and he falls off the chair in a faint just as Joel Duffle collapses under the table, and the doctors at the Clinic Hospital are greatly baffled to receive, from the same address at the same time, one patient who is

suffering from undernourishment, and another patient who is unconscious from overeating.

Well, in the meantime, after the excitement subsides, and wagers are settled, we take Miss Violette Shumberger to the main floor in Mindy's for a midnight snack, and when she speaks of her wonderful triumph, she is disposed to give much credit to Nicely-Nicely Jones.

'You see,' Violette says, 'what I really whisper to him is that I am a goner. I whisper to him that I cannot possibly take one bite of the pie if my life depends on it, and if he has any bets down to try and hedge them off as quickly as possible.

'I fear,' she says, 'that Nicely-Nicely will be greatly disappointed in my showing, but I have a confession to make to him when he gets out of the hospital. I forget about the contest,' Violette says, 'and eat my regular dinner of pig's knuckles and sauerkraut an hour before the contest starts, and,' she says, 'I have no doubt this tends to affect my form somewhat. So,' she says, 'I owe everything to Nicely-Nicely's quick thinking.'

It is several weeks after the great eating contest that I run into Miss Hilda Slocum on Broadway, and it seems to me that she looks much better nourished than the last time I see her, and when I mention this she says:

'Yes,' she says, 'I cease dieting. I learn my lesson,' she says. 'I learn that male characters do not appreciate anybody who tries to ward off surplus tissue. What male characters wish is substance. Why,' she says, 'only a week ago my editor, Mr. McBurple, tells me he will love to take me dancing if only I get something on me for him to take hold of. I am very fond of dancing,' she says.

'But,' I say, 'what of Nicely-Nicely Jones? I do not see him around lately.'

'Why,' Miss Hilda Slocum says, 'do you not hear what this cad does? Why, as soon as he is strong enough to leave the hospital, he elopes with my dearest friend, Miss Violette Shumberger, leaving me a note saying something about two

souls with but a single thought. They are down in Florida running a barbecue stand, and,' she says, 'the chances are, eating like seven mules.'

'Miss Slocum,' I say, 'can I interest you in a portion of Mindy's chicken fricassee?'

'With dumplings?' Miss Hilda Slocum says. 'Yes,' she says, 'you can. Afterwards I have a date to go dancing with Mr. McBurple. I am crazy about dancing,' she says.

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