

GRAND SERIAL STORY.

JUDGMENT.

The Most Amazing Story Ever Penned.

FOR NEW READERS.

SIR JOHN MILLBANK, a successful, but stern judge, quarrels with his only son,

JACK, who leaves his father's house to fight his own way in the world; and whilst serving with the Australian contingent, under the name of Dick Foster, he meets, and falls in love with

KITTY, the adopted daughter of Sir John. However, Sir John has arranged for her marriage with

LORD HAVERHAM. In a moment of despair, Kitty writes to Dick, asking him to meet her in the Blue Room at Rivercourt Mansions. At the appointed hour, Lord Haverham goes to the Blue Room to write some letters, and, unknown to the guests, Sir John meets him there. An altercation arises between the two men, resulting in the accidental death of Lord Haverham. Later, Dick arrives in the Blue Room, is caught and accused of murder, and found guilty. Whilst passing the sentence of death, Sir John recognises the prisoner as his own son Jack! A few days later, Sir John interviews the prisoner at his private residence under escort of the warders, and tells him he will have to serve at least three years' imprisonment. Just as they are leaving, Dick with the assistance of Kitty makes his escape, and that night they decide to drive into Winnerleigh; but the car breaks down, and they are forced to accept the hospitality of

BEAUMONT CHASE, a millionaire. The following morning, Dick's host informs him that Sir John had called during the night and taken his daughter away. Dick, believing this story, leaves that morning for Winnerleigh. Kitty goes down to breakfast, and is cross-examined by Mr Chase, but on his promise of assistance tells him the whole story. At a fabulous price Mr Chase engages the services of

MR PELHAM WEBB, a clever but unscrupulous detective, to find Dick Foster, and extracts a promise from Kitty not to attempt to see or write to her lover until a year has elapsed. Dick arrives at the residence of

CLARA CLARKE, a clever actress and a friend of Kitty's. With the aid of grease-paints she transforms Dick to a life-like representation of her father. Just at this moment Pelham Webb arrives and insists upon interviewing Dick alone. Dick realises that the detective has discovered his identity.

THE RETURN TO BEAUMONT HALL.

In the common affairs of life an excessive passion for dramatic effect sometimes leads to results as unpleasant as they are unexpected.

Pelham Webb had his little triumph. Both Dick Foster and the actress were completely taken aback. In a flash they realised that their game was up, and that all their carefully made plans were tumbled to ruin.

This little man with the sharp, rat-like face knew all. He had penetrated the disguise, and was now gloating over his triumph.

Yes, he had brought off his dramatic game in a neat and effective manner. What he forgot to take into account was the effect his words might have on a desperate man.

He was soon to be enlightened.

Dick Foster was not a play-actor by nature, and the task of playing the part of old Christopher Clarke during the last hour while Inspector Biggs and his men had been searching the house was a pretty severe strain to his nerves.

The knowledge that he was discovered came almost as a relief to him, and, at the same time filled him with a savage anger, and a fierce determination to do something.

At the detective's words, uttered with little snigger of triumph, Dick leaped from his chair.

His right hand shot out, and he seized Mr Pelham Webb by the throat.

The next moment the little man was lifted off his feet and flung full length on the table.

There the escaped convict held him, pinned down helplessly, while he wriggled desperately but unavailingly to get away.

He tried to speak, but the hand on his throat prevented him from uttering any but incoherent gurgles of protest.

Miss Clara Clarke was terribly alarmed, and, at the same time, rather pleasantly thrilled.

"Oh, Mr Foster," she gasped, "don't—don't kill him!"

"I won't if he keeps quiet," growled the young man significantly. "Just see if he has any men outside."

Pelham Webb ceased to struggle, and somehow managed to articulate a sentence. "I am alone!" he panted.

Dick released slightly his deadly grip. "Is that true?" he demanded threateningly.

"On my soul it is," spluttered the detective, still choking and gasping. "I'm alone. I always work single-handed."

"And you thought you could take me single-handed?" muttered Dick grimly.

"I don't want to take you at all," declared the other eagerly. "If you would only let me speak. I want to help you. I am your friend."

Dick raised his head and gazed doubtfully across the table at the actress.

He was bewildered, and turned naturally to the woman for guidance and advice.

"What's he mean? What shall I do?" he said hopelessly.

"Sit him up and give him a drink," said Miss Clarke, with the practical common-sense which was not the least of her good qualities.

Dick slid his victim off the table into chair, and then mixed him a stiff whisky and soda.

Pelham Webb gulped down the beverage greedily, and after a few moments seemed a little restored.

Dick turned away. His gust of passion had passed, and a certain weariness, a feeling of hopeless resignation took possession of him.

After all there was nothing more to be done. He had been run to earth. Further resistance was useless. He had better submit quietly. Kitty had not communicated with him. Doubtless she was unable to help him any further. Life was all a matter of luck, and the cards were against him. All he could do was to take his defeat without whimpering.

While these thoughts were passing in his mind he suddenly became aware that his friend the actress and Pelham Webb the detective were talking together in low tones.

"You may have heard that I am a wealthy woman."

There was an unmistakable significance in Miss Clarke's tones.

Dick, who had flung himself down in another part of the room, rose quickly and advanced to the others.

"Please don't bother any more, Miss Clarke," he said impulsively. "You have

done enough for me, and I thank you. Don't waste your money on this fellow. I don't suppose he could help me if he wanted to. He is acting under orders. Come, sir, I am ready to go with you. I am sorry if I hurt you, but you took me by surprise. I am your prisoner. Don't be alarmed, I shall not attack you again. Let us be off."

"I thank you for that assurance," said the little man with dignity. "You are certainly wise to come with me quietly, and I hope before the night is out to prove to you that I am your friend."

Dick looked at him curiously, but the detective made no further explanation, but, turning to the actress, continued to talk to her in low tones.

What he said seemed to please her, for her good-humoured face beamed and when a little later she said good-bye to Dick she was quite cheerful.

"Good-bye, my lad," she said, "and good luck. Keep your heart up. It is a great thing to be young. Keep smiling. There's a good time coming."

It was past midnight when Pelham Webb and his prisoner drove away from Winnerleigh.

At the detective's suggestion Dick still wore his disguise.

THE OLD MAN WITH THE HOE.

"So he slipped through your fingers?"

"For the moment."

"That's a nuisance. He will be captured by the regular police, and that will spoil my game."

"I think not. The man has friends who are hiding him, but I have a clue. Leave it to me."

The speakers were Beaumont Chase the millionaire and Pelham Webb the detective.

Pelham Webb loved intrigue for its own sake, and not for the first time in his life he had decided to play a double game.

He felt he could best retain his influence with the millionaire by not letting that gentleman know everything.

Beaumont Chase frowned as he paced restlessly up and down the room at Beaumont Hall.

"It is most important to my plans that this man Foster did not make an unexpected appearance at any time within the next twelve months," he said.

"You leave that to me," said Webb.

"You seem very confident."

"I am."

"Well, what are your plans?"

"You shall know them fully in good time. For the moment take it from me that I have arranged everything. I have taken every precaution. My agents are fully instructed. You go on with your own plans, sir, and leave the rest to me."

The millionaire smiled.

"You inspire confidence, Webb. All the same, I wish you wouldn't be so confoundedly mysterious. Who is this old man you brought into the place the other morning? My steward tells me he is a very indifferent gardener, and yet you say I must employ him."

"Yes, he occupies the second lodge in the lower grounds, and he won't be in anybody's way."

"But who is he?"

"One of my agents. A very clever fellow. You don't know what may be going on in your house, sir; but old Mr Clarke will soon know all about it."

"Oh, I see. Well, I leave it to you. But for Heaven's sake keep Dick Foster out of the way."

"I am making good progress with old Millbank. The old boy is a wreck, but I have won his confidence, and I have persuaded him to come down here for a holiday. He arrives to-day."

"You are anxious to cultivate this friendship with Sir John Millbank?"

"I am. I was never so keen on anything in my life," admitted the other with sudden frankness.

The detective looked at him shrewdly. "Will the judge be alone when he comes?" he asked quietly.

The millionaire shrugged his shoulders, and tried to appear indifferent.

"Probably, his daughter may join him later."

"I see. Well, sir, whatever your plans are you may proceed with them without anxiety. Dick Foster has disappeared. He may be dead, or he may be in hiding. In any case, you may rely on me that he will not inconveniently reappear."

"That is all I ask of you, Webb," returned the millionaire eagerly. "But do not be over-confident. Keep a careful watch. Never relax in your efforts. With

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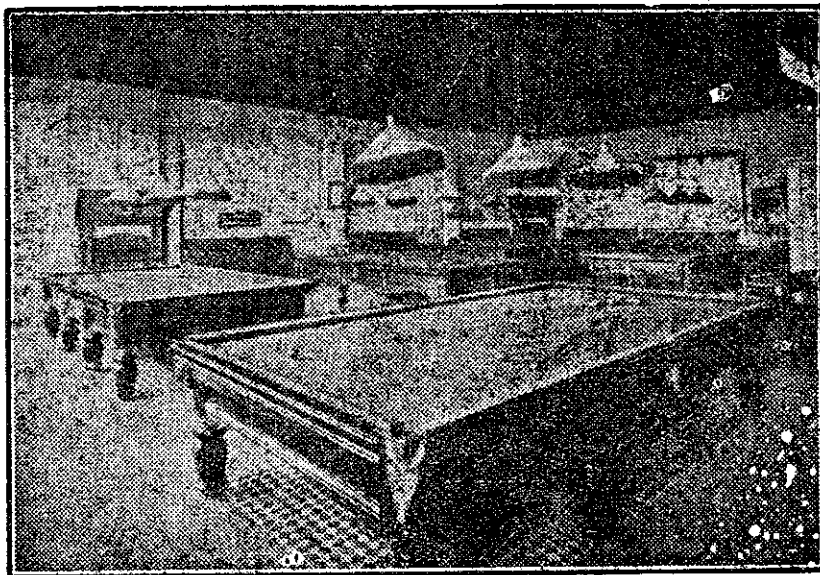
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BILLIARD NOTES.

THE LONG IN-OFF THE WHITE AFTER THE BALLS ARE TOUCHING.

Many professionals, when playing this in-off, take the object white slightly fuller than half-ball, in order to cause it to strike the side cushion several inches higher up the table than it would as the result of an exact or slightly less than half-ball contact. By striking the side cushion high up, the object ball impinges on the top cushion at a point considerably further away from the red than in the ordinary way, and on its rebound is consequently thrown more into the centre of the table. By this means a drop cannon is generally left, and this enables the player to get position for top-of-the-table play.

Occasional practice of this set stroke, which so often has to be played, cannot fail to be of benefit. The man who now and then makes a twenty or thirty break, but seldom or never reaches forty, will miss this shot as often as he gets it, and the poor player will almost invariably get stranded over this in-off. There is nothing really difficult in the shot, which should be played with a free flowing stroke; but owing to the distance the cue ball has to travel before it reaches the pocket, pretty accurate hitting of the object ball is necessary. In fact, few half-ball strokes demand such correct hitting as the one under discussion.

Although with the cue ball placed about 3/4 in from the end of the D the angle is the natural angle for a half-ball stroke it has a somewhat different look from the angle of the most half-ball in-offs; but this is simply owing to the fact that in most in-offs into a top pocket the line of aim—that is, the line from the cue ball to the object ball—is either more or less parallel with the side cushion, or else slanting towards it, whereas when the object ball is on the centre spot, the line of aim is slanting very decidedly away from the cushion. Were it not that this

in-off is a set stroke—that is to say, the striker has not to judge the angle but simply to place his ball on a known spot—the stroke would be a far more difficult one, even for a good player. That this is so may be easily tested by placing the ball in different positions a few inches above and below the centre spot, and likewise to the right and left of it, and then playing an in-off from any part of the baulk-line.

As already stated, generally speaking, the best way of playing the in-off from the white on the centre spot—after the object balls have been spotted as a consequence of the cue ball being in contact with another ball—is by a nice free flowing stroke, of sufficient pace to bring the object ball round the table, in order to leave an in-off into the centre pocket on. Such a stroke is, however, not always advisable when the table is a very slow one, owing to the difficulty of driving the ball far enough round, except by means of a stroke of considerably more than moderate strength.

By means of a rather slow stroke, the object ball may be made to come to rest somewhere between A and B, and when the object ball lies on or near this line, good position for a cannon or an in-off into the top pocket—according to what part of the line A—B the ball is on—will always be left for the next stroke. Even should the white ball come a little further down the table than B, and no ball-to-ball cannon left, a cannon off the white off the top cushion would still be an easier stroke than any cannon when the white lies very near the side cushion.

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