

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, unbeknown 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. Pelham Webb discovers Dick, and unbeknown to Beaumont Chase, takes him to the latter's residence where he is installed as gardener. Sir John and Kitty arrive at Beaumont Hall, and Beaumont Chase loses no time in asking Sir John for the hand of his daughter. Sir John consents. That afternoon Kitty receives news that the gardener is seriously injured.

The concluding paragraphs of last week's instalment, reprinted to refresh readers' memories.

Dick Foster received the veiled taunt without betraying feeling of any kind. "And now?" he said quietly.

"And now I am off to London," replied Chase briskly.

"To London?" ejaculated Dick, startled. "What for?"

"What for?" retorted the other boisterously. "Why, to continue the courtship of Kitty, of course. You tell me I must make love to my wife. I am going to follow your excellent advice."

And then, with a laugh, he turned on

his heel and strode into the house, leaving Dick Foster standing alone on the terrace.

BACK IN LONDON.

Dick Foster stood alone on the terrace, gazing out at the quiet, peaceful, sunlit landscape. But in his soul there was no peace.

He was a free man, his name was cleared, the whole world was open to him; but all this counted as nothing to him now.

He was free, but Kitty was a prisoner, held fast by legal bonds which no royal clemency could put asunder. She was a prisoner for life, and her gaoler was Beaumont Chase!

It was a bitter thought, but one still more bitter came to his mind as he stood there alone.

The day might come when Kitty might be reconciled to her captivity; she might learn to love the man who had won her by trickery and force.

Beaumont Chase was fabulously rich, he was good-looking, and he was clever. His style was of the kind which fascinated women. With all his advantages, was it so improbable that he should win the heart of the innocent young girl whom he had dared so much to make his own?

Dick Foster sighed wearily.

"I ought to be glad," he muttered to himself. "I only want her to be happy. I am shut out. I can never be the one to make her happy. Why should I grudge her the happiness she may attain with another?"

He buried his face in his hands, and for a long while remained quite still, fighting a silent battle for mastery over the fierce, passionate desire which tore at his heart-strings.

He had no illusions. Too well he knew that the hour of renunciation had come. Henceforth he must think of Kitty only as a dear, far-off memory.

She would figure no more in his life.

He had rendered her this one last service—he had rescued her from the persecution of her husband and given her a brief period of liberty, during which she could make up her mind and decide upon her future.

Whatever that future was, he Dick Foster, would have no part in it.

Presently he turned and re-entered the house.

He inquired for Mr Chase.

"The master has gone to London, sir," replied the servant to whom he addressed himself. "He left word that he hoped you would remain at the Hall as long as it suited your convenience."

Dick expressed his thanks, but explained that he was also returning to London.

It was obviously impossible to stay any longer at Beaumont Hall. Indeed, it seemed to Dick that it was impossible, or, at any rate, useless, to stay any longer in England.

He decided to get to town, and as soon as possible obtain a passage back to Australia.

There was nothing else to be done. He had done all he could for Kitty. She needed him no more, and, above all, he must never see her again.

If they should meet, if he should look into her dear eyes once more—Ah, no, he could not trust himself! That must never be!

He returned to London, paid a visit to the headquarters of the Australian contingent and discovered that he would have to wait three weeks at least before a passage could be found for him.

A small sum of money was advanced to him, and he went off to find rooms.

He knew little of London, and was at a loss to know where to look for what he wanted.

After wandering about for some time, he found himself in Holborn.

He was strolling leisurely along that broad thoroughfare, gazing in at the shop windows, when someone ran into him.

He looked down, and perceived a little old man, of rather odd appearance, trying to attract his attention.

The little man was about sixty years of age. His long black hair, plentifully streaked with grey, nearly reached to his shoulders. He wore an Inverness cape, and a black wide-awake hat, and under his left arm he carried a big canvas.

"Foster!" he exclaimed eagerly. "Foster, don't you know me? My name's Pinch."

Dick stared, and then his face lit up as he recognised an old artist he had known in Australia.

"Harry Pinch, by all that's wonderful!" he cried. "What on earth brings you so far from Sydney?"

"The war, my lad—the war. Tried to join up. They wouldn't have me. Shockingly mismanaged war, sonny! No use for brains. I had to stand out. Never mind; carried on somehow! Come to my studio. We'll have a talk."

He darted down a narrow alley, dragging Dick with him, and presently they came to a big, desolate-looking square.

The artist piloted his newfound friend into the most dilapidated of them all, and up a dark and greasy staircase.

At the top, however, they came to a light and airy room, with a top-light.

It was untidy, but comfortably furnished and clean enough.

Dick dropped into a big armchair and looked about him.

"You're pretty cosy here. Doing well?" he said.

The little man nodded, with a grin.

"At last. It's been a struggle. London hasn't bothered about art these last few years. I've been close to the edge, old son, I can tell you! But the tides turned. I've found a patron."

"Good!"

"An amazing chap! Buys any blessed thing I put before him. He can't stop himself. It's almost a disease with him."

Dick laughed.

"Splendid! Hold on to him, Harry! Don't let him slip through your fingers."

"You bet! Why, only yesterday—Hush!"

The little man hopped out of his chair and stood quivering with excitement in the centre of the studio.

"He's coming!" he whispered.

Sure enough, a heavy ponderous step was heard mounting the stairs.

Then the door opened, and the patron appeared.

He was a big, burly man of fifty, with a ruddy, cheerful face, and a pair of keen, grey eyes.

The artist welcomed him warmly, with an odd mixture of dignity and deference.

Mr Dixon Drake was an Englishman by birth, but he had spent the last thirty years in Australia, where he had made a lot of money.

He was a jolly old fellow, and clearly a great admirer of Harry Pinch's work.

The artist took an early opportunity of introducing his friend.

At the name, Mr Drake gave a little start, and stared at Dick.

"Not Mr Richard Foster, of 49 Burns street, Melbourne, by any chance?" he said quickly.

Dick nodded.

"Yes," he answered, more than a little surprised, "I lived there quite a while just before the war."

Mr Drake put his hand in his pocket, drew out a small memorandum-book, and turned its pages rapidly.

"H'm! Remarkable! Remarkable coincidence! Glad to meet you, Mr Foster! Do you want to sell?"

Dick stared in open-mouthed astonishment.

"Sell? Sell what?" he exclaimed.

Mr Drake frowned.

"You don't know what I mean?"

"Haven't the least idea. I'm not an artist. I have nothing to sell!"

"Oh! You are a rich man maybe, Mr Foster?"

Dick laughed.

"On the contrary. When I get all that is due to me, I shall be worth about fifty pounds."

"Dear me!" remarked Mr Drake, scratching his head thoughtfully. "Ever read the papers?"

"Never. Why?"

(Continued on page 6.)

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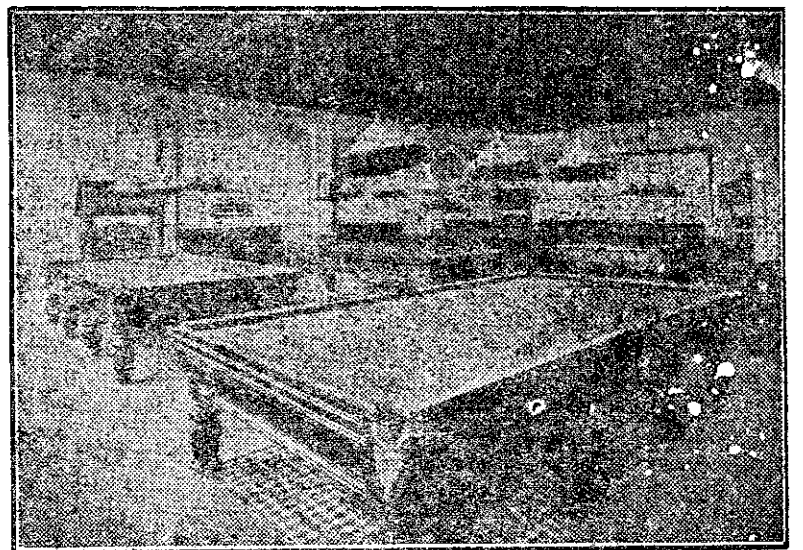
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CIVIC BILLIARD ROOM.

NEWS OFFICE BUILDINGS, DEE STREET, INVERCARGILL.

(Above "The Digger.")

EVERY ATTENTION AND CIVILITY.



BILLIARD NOTES.

A DIFFICULT IN-OFF.

An example of an in-off that is often on, and while strokes of this nature are always difficult owing to the great judgment required as to where the cushion must be hit (a very slight error will cause the stroke to fail), they are not quite so difficult as they no doubt appear to the majority of players.

The white ball over a top pocket, and it is intended to be in such a position that, whilst a ball held in one's finger could be passed into the pocket, touching the end of the table, without disturbing the other ball, there is barely 1-16 of an inch to spare—this is, about 1-32 on each side as the ball is passed through. In playing an in-off with the white ball so located, especially when striking from a position a considerable distance away from the pocket, the safest way of getting the stroke is to aim straight at the pocket, as though playing to give a three miss. The reason for this is that from a distance it would be very difficult indeed to give a three miss even if facing the pocket, as the ball would have to go into the pocket, just missing both the side cushion and the object-ball by 1-32 of an inch. If it travelled only a shade to one side of this three-miss path, it would either graze the side cushion and then graze the ball, or else finely touch the ball in the first instance, in either case finding the pocket. If any player doubt this, let him try this stroke a dozen times, playing from a distance, and see how often he can give a three miss, and he will be surprised at the result. If, on the other hand, a player tried to play such a stroke by first striking the cushion, there would always be a probability of the in-off being missed owing to the object-ball being struck too full.

When the stroke is played from the D, no part of which is facing the opening of the pocket, the space between the object-ball and the opposite cushion may be slightly increased without much fear of a three miss being given. Especially will this be the case when playing from the end of the D on the same side of the table as the pocket played for.

The white ball over the top pocket—in one case on the upper angle, and in the other on the lower angle—and it is intended in each case to be in such a position that a ball held in one's fingers could not be passed between the object ball and the opposite cushion, the span between the ball and the cushion being from 1-32nd to 1-16th of an inch less than the diameter of the ball. In positions like this the in-off can be made by the poorest of players. All that is necessary is to play with a fair amount of strength straight at the pocket, just as though trying to give a three miss, and if good aim be taken, the in-off cannot very well be missed. What happens is this: the cue-ball, colliding strongly with the object-ball presses the latter into the yielding cushion, and so literally squeezes its way past the object-ball into the pocket, just as though a ball were taken in one's hand and forced by pressure in between the object-ball and the cushion.

The limitation of the space through which it is possible to squeeze a ball when playing this stroke varies slightly on different tables, depending to some extent upon the cut of the pockets, and also on the resiliency of the cushions; but the stroke is on to a greater or less degree on any table, and, moreover, when on, is never difficult.

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