

Elderly Tory

THE REAL NAT GOULD

(Continued from page 15.)

AFTER a time, as the serial went on, the proprietor said: "How long is this story going to run?"

As Nat Gould was paid so much a chapter he naturally wanted it to "be continued in our next" for as long as possible.

"It is about time you wound it up," said the proprietor.

"Don't you like it?" asked Nat Gould.

"Oh, yes," said the proprietor, "it's a good yarn, but it's getting a bit expensive."

Nat Gould says: "I did as he desired and wound up in four more chapters."

SOME few months later the representative of a London publisher asked to have a look at the manuscript of the story. Nat Gould left it with him. Two months later, having lost interest in the novel, he met the agent again.

"How much do you want for that novel of yours?" asked the agent. "Will you take £— for it?"

"The sum," says Nat Gould, "was in three figures. I almost gasped for breath."

THE book was published under the name of "The Double Event" in 1891 and was on the Australian market by November. It came out just at the right moment, for the Melbourne Cup meeting was the week after. Moreover the Caulfield Cup and the Melbourne Cup was the big "double event" of the story.

The novel, first of the long series, had an amazing run, and paved the way for all the other successes that were to help fill out the coat and waistcoat of the nice, Tory-looking elderly gentleman of the portrait.

He stayed for eleven years in Australia and (again one hears the decanter of port jump as his fist hammers the table): "I look back," he says, "on that time as the best for shaping and making a man of me. There is nothing like colonial experience for putting a man on his mettle."

It was in 1895 that he decided to return to England. He sold up his home in Australia and set off. As the ship moved away from the Sydney wharf, someone called out:

"Give us a tip for the next Derby, 'Verax.'"

"Wallace," I called at the top of my voice.

Sure enough at the next Victorian Racing Club Spring meeting, Carbine's son won.

ONE thing more the elderly gentleman of the portrait has to say, and there is no answer to it:

"It is rather amusing to be told I have no pretensions to style, when I don't profess to have any. The object of writing a novel is to tell a story that will hold the reader from the start to finish; a story that grips him so that he will not put the book down until he has read the last page. That is the object I have in view when I write, and I think I may claim to have succeeded."

Does anyone dare to question that?



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