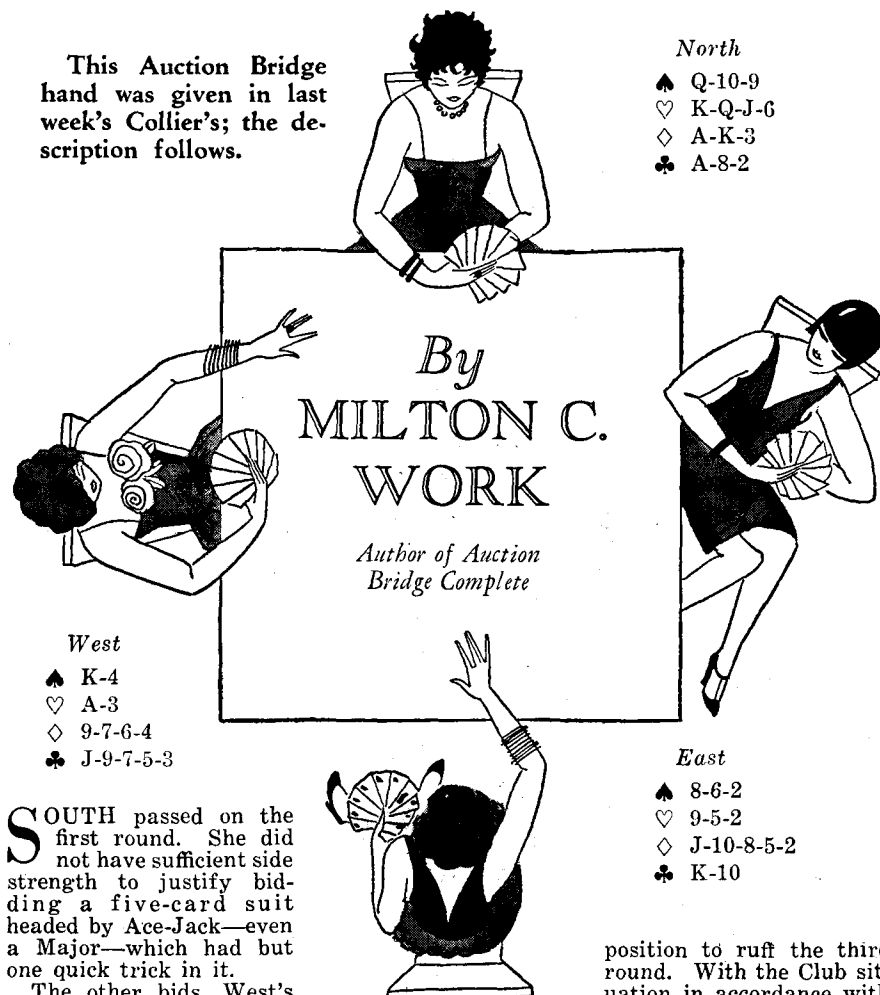


How would you play it?

This Auction Bridge hand was given in last week's Collier's; the description follows.



West

♠ K-4
♥ A-3
♦ 9-7-6-4
♣ J-9-7-5-3

North

♠ Q-10-9
♥ K-Q-J-6
♦ A-K-3
♣ A-8-2

East

♠ 8-6-2
♥ 9-5-2
♦ J-10-8-5-2
♣ K-10

South

♠ A-J-7-5-3
♥ 10-8-7-4
♦ Q
♣ Q-6-4

SOUTH passed on the first round. She did not have sufficient side strength to justify bidding a five-card suit headed by Ace-Jack—even a Major—which had but one quick trick in it.

The other bids, West's pass, North's No Trump and East's pass on the first round, were obvious.

South bid 2 Spades on the second round. She was fully justified by her Spade holding and the distribution of the remainder of her hand; a singleton, while not in itself sufficient reason for a take-out, nevertheless is always an argument in favor of one.

After South's two Spades, and a pass by West, North had a moderately close choice between a pass and two No Trumps; but having three cards headed by two honors in the suit bid secondarily by South and only one stopper in Clubs, the probabilities of making game seemed greater at Spades than at No Trump.

East, of course, passed and the bid was South's two Spades.

The Play

AS I saw this hand played, West properly opened with the fourth best Club. The Declarer passed the trick up to her Queen, playing small from Dummy. East won with the King of Clubs, and of course returned that suit. The Declarer won in the Dummy and then tried her trump finesse, leading the Queen from Dummy and playing small from Closed Hand. West's King of Trumps won, and West then led a third Club which East trumped, this being the third trick for the adversaries (the King of Clubs, the King of trumps and the ruff of the third Club). After that West made her Ace of Hearts, so East and West won four tricks and saved the game.

At the end of the hand South commented upon the hard luck she had encountered in finding both black Kings on the wrong side of her Aces, and in having East get in a ruff of Clubs. Apparently it did not occur to her that she had allowed a practically sure game to slip through her fingers. When the small Club was led there was a greater probability that East had the King of that suit than that the lead was from it; also, with the Trey of Clubs missing, there was a reasonable chance that the lead was from a five-card suit and, if so, East held but two and would be in

position to ruff the third round. With the Club situation in accordance with probabilities, playing a small Club from Dummy to the first trick would mean that the making or losing of the game would hinge upon the even chance of the location of the adverse King of Spades. (Neither adversary had bid.) But Declarer could have made her game practically sure by the following play:

The Ace of Clubs from Dummy on trick 1; this followed by leading the Ace and King of Diamonds from Dummy to tricks 2 and 3, Closed Hand discarding a Club on the third trick. After that the Spade finesse could be taken with impunity because, even if it lost, the adversaries would not be apt to take more than one Club and the Ace of Hearts in addition. With any normal division of the adverse cards, this play must make game. It is obvious that the play made by Declarer on the first trick—viz., the small Club from Dummy—would work beautifully if the lead were from the King. In that case, and with the King of Spades held by East, a small Slam (every trick but the Ace of Hearts) would be obtainable; but there was little probability of such a distribution, and in any event it is not wise to gamble upon the chance of making Slam at the risk of losing game. Game is the all-important object of the Declarer and she should take no risks when the winning of it is at stake.

Next week's hand is given below; make up your mind how you would bid and play it before you read next week's description.

North
S. 10-7-5-2
H. 9-6-5
D. 8
C. 9-8-5-3-2

East
S. J-9
H. K-J-3
D. K-10-9-6-5
C. Q-J-6

South
S. A-8-6-3
H. A-7-2
D. A-4-3
C. K-7-4

West
S. K-Q-4
H. Q-10-8-4
D. Q-J-7-2
C. A-10

The Prince of Escape

Continued from page 40

Valdez was not surprised. He had before noticed how the first hearing of a name will often bring the actuality trailing in its wake. Half an hour ago the name of Sir Helios had just entered his ears, and here was the man's secretary. What of it? Merely another man, one in the thicker thirties, with a foreign, southern effect of sal-low jaw and eyes too long and dark. Women would probably call him handsome; they liked that expansive look and a sneer along the mouth.

Valdez glanced involuntarily at the clock, but Mastanien rode that down.

"Plenty of time. I told Belloc to send the Marquardt woman on ahead of you tonight."

VALDEZ' thin nose scented things.

It took power to upset the iron routine of the Imperial Theatre with five thousand people out in front. And that power was here in his dressing-room. The two men seemed to feel it; their very shirt fronts breathed influence. Niklaus lounged to a chair, shooting an immediate question:

"Would Mr. Valdez be interested in making a great deal of money?"

Valdez stilled, instinctively shrinking himself, as he did when the chains and handcuffs were laid upon him. Behind it he was thinking things . . . this fellow was too smooth and sinuous, with too much veiled contempt in his glance. . . . Men don't offer men money except for things they don't want to do themselves. "That would depend," he heard himself saying.

"The Prince of Escape is wary," Niklaus laughed, then bent over the cards still spread upon the table, and that foreignness crept into his accent. "You make mystic preparations, eh? That is excellent."

Why it should be excellent he did not say. The smoke of a fat cigarette curled like incense from his lips. He looked, Valdez thought, like a Spanish Hebrew. There was effort in his Englishness; beneath it was an opulence which broke out in his speech.

"You have heard of my chief, Sir Helios Cordato, of course. He has been much heard of these last few days; more so than he cares about. He is not the kind who plays to the mob. These beastly newspapers, poking their damn' inquisitive beaks into a private business matter! It will do them no good, of course." An almond-nailed hand gestured the finish of that. "We have acquired control of the Aërial Syndicate; we are the Aërial Syndicate now, and we shall remain so. We are sorry if it embarrasses the present ministry, but—"

He shrugged that away, turning to Mastanien, speaking in careful casualness:

"I had an interview, on Sir Helios' behalf, with Blaze broke at Downing Street this afternoon. He was much upset over the manner in which Parliament is taking our purchase of the shares. We have had the shares for weeks; what they are upset over is the matter being made public. He expects a vote of 'no confidence' in the House tonight. That will send him scuttling to Buckingham Palace tomorrow to hand in his portfolio, and the king will be obliged to send for the Labor party."

He lolled long, black-clad legs, blew smoke, and was impressive. Mastanien sat like painted granite; ministries might come and prime ministers might go, but the Imperial Theatre would play to packed seats all the same. Niklaus glanced at him with a cool nod of dismissal.

"If you will leave me to speak with this Mr. Valdez—"

Mastanien rose, and Valdez wondered again. His life was in the theatre and of the theatre, so he could barely imagine a greater power than the ruler of an international vaudeville corporation. But here was Mastanien himself being calmly dismissed from a dressing-room in one of his own theatres.

At the door the manager paused for a warning: "Remember, fifteen minutes only."

"Five will be enough," Niklaus said. Valdez' eyes sought Mastanien's for a possible message as to what this interview might be, but the other was stonily aloof. Yet that in itself was almost a message, Valdez thought, as the door closed, shutting him in with this Niklaus.

The man seemed in no hurry to begin. He sprawled there, emitting thick smoke rings, like one surrounded by rich visions. When he spoke it was those visions coming to utterance.

"Radio," he nodded, "is still in its infancy. A bawling infant, making noise enough, but not yet grown. . . . There are already in the world secret inventions which will transform it—inventions that, could we secure them, would give the Aërial Syndicate a practical control of the world's ears. God!" The smoke puffed from his lips in a sudden cloud. "What a thing! The world's ears dangling from one's fingers. . . . that is where you can come in and be well paid for it. . . ."

"Yes?" Valdez asked neutrally.

Niklaus shrugged, speaking as if the other were miles away. "Aha, this fellow sprouts no hooks to catch our bait, eh? Usually they open at the mention of money. Well. . . . We have other tricks in our bag."

He laid a photograph across the strange card which Valdez had drawn from that occult deck. "You seem to have raised the devil there; well—I play the queen. Women, money, cards and the devil!" He laughed thickly. "A good picture of the average man's life—as he would like to have it, if he could. Look at her, she's worth it."

Valdez looked; then looked again, and long. Only a pictured face, still young enough to be a girl's, softened enough to be a woman's, beautiful enough to be that alone. But one met beauty daily in theatres, and it needed more than just that. What had caught him was an expression, as if the camera had surprised something she tried to hide from the world. It was the same look he sometimes caught in his own mirrored reflection: a wistfulness, almost a puzzledness, as of one caught and held by a power which he could not understand.

"Who is she?" he asked, and Niklaus laughed in insolent derision.

"Oh, that is an old trick of you stage people, to pretend that you have never heard of your greatest public rival."

Valdez' mouth tightened in retort. "I see no reason for lying about it, and even if I did I probably wouldn't. I've found it doesn't ever pay."

NIKLAUS' eyes, long and veiled as those of an Angora cat, opened to roundness. "You mean you haven't heard of Brenda Hope, now publicly known as The Lady of Sleep?"

"Oh—"

"She is the only daughter of the late Sir Mannister Hope, the greatest scientist of his day; possibly of all days up to now. A colossal man! Too colossal, since he reached scientific conclusions so much ahead of his time that other scientists accused him of having gone mad. You must have heard of his famous Equation of Space."

"Heard of it, yes," Valdez said. "But as to understanding it—"

"They say there are only six people in the world who can. Even the Royal Society threw up its hands, while the French Academy wagged its beards."

"Was that why they said he was mad?"

"No; that came when he went to India to study under the occult masters. He discovered this state he calls Deep Sleep, and taught his daughter how to enter it. He claimed it as a state of absolute knowledge, and the scientists declare him crazy."

Valdez' shoulders stirred as he remembered those strangely quiet thou-

sands pulled from midnight London. "For a crazy girl she certainly gets the crowds," he remarked.

"Anyone who goes over the edge of ordinary human possibilities has to meet the charge of being either crazy or a charlatan. You also go over that edge, in some way known only to yourself, and you cleverly meet it by announcing it as a trick. It is that"—Niklaus' hand, ringless, yet curiously rich, tapped for attention—"that 'going over the edge' of yours which makes you possibly valuable to us."

"Yes?" Valdez asked.

"Miss Hope, when she gets into this strange sleep—as she does at her public séances at the Albert Hall—is able to give an absolutely correct answer to any question asked of her, even about things of which she knows nothing when awake. They say she goes into this trance, as I suppose it is, every night. We would want you to penetrate to the lady's bedroom, about two o'clock some morning—I am told that is the witching hour when she's at her best—and ask her one question."

"And then?" Valdez asked, still motionless.

NIKLAUS blew more insolent smoke. "Oh, we put no restriction on you, provided you get the information. The trouble is that she's difficult to get at. The Countess of Wallingford and the government crowd see to that. So we come to you, you see?"

"But I don't yet," Valdez told him.

"My dear fellow, if you can get out of impossible places, you ought to be able to get into them also. The late Sir Mannister Hope, that Wizard of Space, was also a wizard of radio. Of course he would be, since the science of radio is the science of space. We know that, before going to India, he compiled notes of experiments and inventions which would revolutionize the whole radio situation. Inventions of incalculable value to the Aerial Syndicate or to any government that could get hold of them. But no trace of them has been found by his executors. Our only hope is that his daughter may have information as to their whereabouts, or that she may be able to discover it while in one of these trances. But, through Lady Wallingford, the prime minister and his crowd are keeping her so secluded that even we have found it impossible to reach her when she is in her condition of this deep sleep."

"But if she's in the hands of these other people," Valdez objected, "surely they've pumped her dry by this time."

Niklaus slid to his feet in lithe irritation. "That is what puzzles us. We are sure they haven't. Blaze broke played fast and loose with Sir Helios Cordato, getting our support for his election and letting us get control of the Aerial Syndicate in return. He thought he was handing us a sucked orange in that. He expected to be able to announce that the government had purchased Mannister Hope's secrets and that the practical control of radio was in their hands. Now he's in a tight place. The newspapers have spilled the soup about Aerial Syndicate. Parliament is looking for a victim, and Blaze broke hasn't a thing to cover himself with. So we are sure that he knows no more of the Hope inventions than we do."

"What makes you think I might succeed in getting the information from Miss Hope, when these others have evidently failed?"

"As I said, you also 'go over the edge' in some way. You might be able to approach her in a different way."

"If you imagine that I'm a trance medium—" Valdez began.

"We don't care what you are, but we are willing to take a chance on your ability to get to Miss Hope. At our convenience we shall call upon your services. You can't escape the Aerial Syndicate—at least, you had better not try to."

Another challenge, and again to escape; the evening was becoming ridiculous. Beginning with weariness, carried on in revolt, it now deepened with implied threat. That Miss Wrex was right; one stuck one's head above one's fellows and got things thrown at it. Premiers, palaces, sleeping ladies and

the secret things of government; Valdez found that he had heard while hardly believing. It was all like people speaking in a dream. He was glad that the door opened suddenly on Mastanien.

"Time's nearly up," Mastanien said. "Marquardt's finishing her act."

More of this damned escape; a whole packing crew and box full of it awaiting him out there on the stage. Valdez' impulse came to sudden speech:

"Would you be in the wings tonight, Mr. Mastanien, and ready to take charge of the stage if anything should happen to me?"

Mastanien's eyes bored at him with sudden coldness.

"You mean, if you fall down on your trick? Remember, young man, that your contract reads—"

"Oh, cut your gas," Valdez flared. "Does your contract contain any clause for—if I succeed too well?"

"What do you mean?"

"It is simply that tonight I might not be able to—well—to get back."

"Get back to where?" Mastanien demanded.

"Not 'back to,'" Valdez corrected softly. "I mean 'back from.' Back from where I'll have to go to get out of that box."

Mastanien stared, as if even his impervious egoism had received a shock. Valdez kept his own counsels, and those behind the curtain were as ignorant as the audience of how his seeming miracles were conducted. He went quickly on:

"If I shouldn't turn up again tonight, I want you to pay my Hindus their salaries for a while. This is June—if you will put my men, the tent, and the box used in the challenge tonight, all on the stage for ten minutes of every evening performance in—let us say, the last week in—in July. Have the box open, of course. Show them that there is nothing in it except *what I shall have to leave in it tonight*—that is important. Then lock it, nail it up, put the tent over it for five minutes, and at one of that week's performances—we won't specify which—I will try to come back into it and be found when you open it again before the audience."

Mastanien's shell broke again; even his granite warmed, like some masculine Galatea struck by admiration. The one thing which he respected was a showman superior to himself.

"Ye gods," he breathed, "just think of the publicity—the colossal, world-whacking publicity. To disappear, right off the stage itself, out of a padlocked challenge box—"

"Leaving all my clothes behind me," Valdez amended. "I couldn't do it with even a pair of socks on me."

Mastanien whistled softly, pacing the carpet outside the rim of light, all theatrical excitement.

"Boy . . . if you can do it . . . the publicity! It'll mean a year solid right here. Then a world tour to follow." His tongue spun pictures, and one could hear the box-office registers clicking in his brain. "New York, the States, South America—Buenos Aires alone will be good for six weeks at a thousand gold a night—"

THE buzzer bit the air. The interpolated act was finishing out on the stage. Mastanien cooled with the theatrical instinct not to excite a performer. Clapping on his opera hat, Niklaus rose and sauntered over to the door.

"I am going to watch your performance, Mr. Valdez. And in these weeks of disappearance which you hint of, you will be able to carry out Sir Helios' commission."

"If he can lay hands on me," Valdez smiled.

"Oh, as to that . . ." Niklaus closed the door behind him with contemptuous assurance.

As soon as he was gone Valdez swung round on Mastanien. "Who is that guy?"

"One of Helios Cordato's jackals."

"Does he keep a cageful?"

"If they'd only keep 'em in a cage." Mastanien sketched a gesture and seemed to think that that finished it. The faint thunder of applause seeped

(Continued on page 44)

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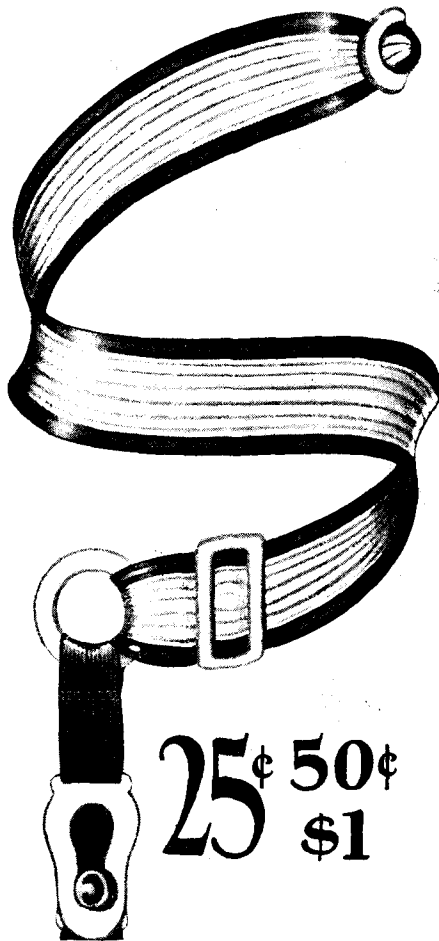
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The Prince of Escape

Continued from page 43



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through the door, and Valdez swiftly dusted fresh powder on his face.

"Well, what about them?" he asked. "I warn you I'll keep the stage waiting until you tell me."

"Well, I know a steam roller when I see one. So I'll say this: if Helios is after you—watch your step."

"You mean I'd better not have anything to do with them?"

"The question is, are they going to not have anything to do with you."

"H'm!" Valdez took up the photograph, looking again and long. "And this girl?"

"I don't know. I went to one of her shows. About five thousand people jammed into that rotten old Albert Hall, all in the dark. It was kind of spooky—nothing but the girl, dead asleep on the platform under a pink light, and a woman who read questions for her to answer."

"Is she a fake?"

"Are you?" Mastanien parried.

"I don't pretend to be anything else."

Mastanien's shell of aloofness thickened about him; he strolled to the door, humming the refrain from a popular success:

*Watch your step, watch your step
And don't you trip!*

The call buzzed again like an angry rattlesnake, with a stage manager's panic behind it. Out there was an empty scene, and five thousand amusement-hungry people waiting across the footlights. Valdez must go. He thrust the photograph into a pocket; with a hand on the door knob Mastanien offered a last word:

"If you are going to put over this mysterious coming-back business, you ought to disappear completely meanwhile."

"I mean to."

"Then that settles it all. Don't let even me know where you are. Then, if anybody asks me, I can't tell 'em."

He opened the door and Valdez flashed past him.

THE stage manager mopped away sweat and nearly wept in relief. Electricians shut off their spotlights and went away. Not even scene shifters were allowed in the wings while Valdez performed. Behind a painted front drop was his special setting of amber velvet curtains, with four Hindus ranged like statues in scarlet. That front drop soared upward, letting in a crack of light. Fixing his face to its public smile, Valdez stepped out.

The same old thing . . . twelve times a week, fifty-two weeks a year. His opening speech was repeating itself somehow out in front of his lips.

Tiers of faces pallid in greenish gloom. It reminded him of those terrible army burying fields which he had seen in France, all miles of little white grave boards. Calling for a committee to come out of that was like raising the dead.

" . . . No tricks will be played upon the gentlemen who honor me by being my guests on this stage. . . ."

One by one they were rising to follow the ushers to the foot bridge over the orchestra. Queer fish drawn by his net of words from that dim sea; 'and the sea gave up its dead!' " . . . I ask you to come as representatives of the entire audience to see that there are no trap doors or other mechanical means—"

So much talking, but nearly through now. "My challenge of fifty guineas . . . shipping department of the Royal Service Stores . . . will those gentlemen kindly come upon the stage?"

They came, bumping their precious box along with them. The usual ponderous affair of two-inch boards and steel clampings. As if they could stop him that way! . . . Ten respectable workmen, solemn with fifty-guinea visions, washed and combed like boys on a Sunday-school picnic. One always shook hands with them and passed their names to the audience.

" . . . Mr. Trustball, ladies and gentlemen. . . . Mr. Slatterways—" That was the one with the startling effect of a frock coat, white trousers and tan shoes. These shipping departments were always good for one laugh at least. The iron floor sheet, safeguard against trapdoors, was hauled forward and the box placed upon it. An extra row of nails was hammered in at his own request. Now he was getting into it and crouching down. Ten faces above him, looking down with that fifty-guinea glare. Poised hammers . . . a hush settling over the house! The darkness of the lid, pounding nails and a clink of chains and locks. Then Gunraj's three taps, the signal that the tent was in place, shutting the box into privacy complete.

Through it all he had kept up that impression of half pathos. A slim young figure, strangely lonely on a crowded stage where every hand was against him!

To escape from that double-ply, treble-nailed packing box was merely the day's work, but to strip in its narrow limits was a tax on even his supple frame. Suit, shirt, underclothes, socks, off they came at last. . . . And then instants of swift, calculated motion, in which he himself could hardly have told what he did.

Amber dimness of the tent. In its silk was a tiny peephole through which he could see those five thousand blobs like goldfish goggling in a giant aquarium. The place filled with a strained hush, throbbled through by the orchestra's deliberately weird music. He shriveled an instant in ridiculous panic. There he was, not a rag upon him, and only that thin, faintly waving curtain between him and all those eyes. He must hurry; there was still much to be done. Yet he had to waste many pre-

cious seconds in absurd thinking. . . .

What was this that he was going to do? "Escape!" But those who escape were only faced by a necessity for more escaping still. The smell of fugitive sweat tickles the nose of every bloodhound within miles. . . . To escape from escaping. . . . The only way to do would be to find some region so closed that there was no possible way out—or something of such charm that one had no wish to leave it. . . .

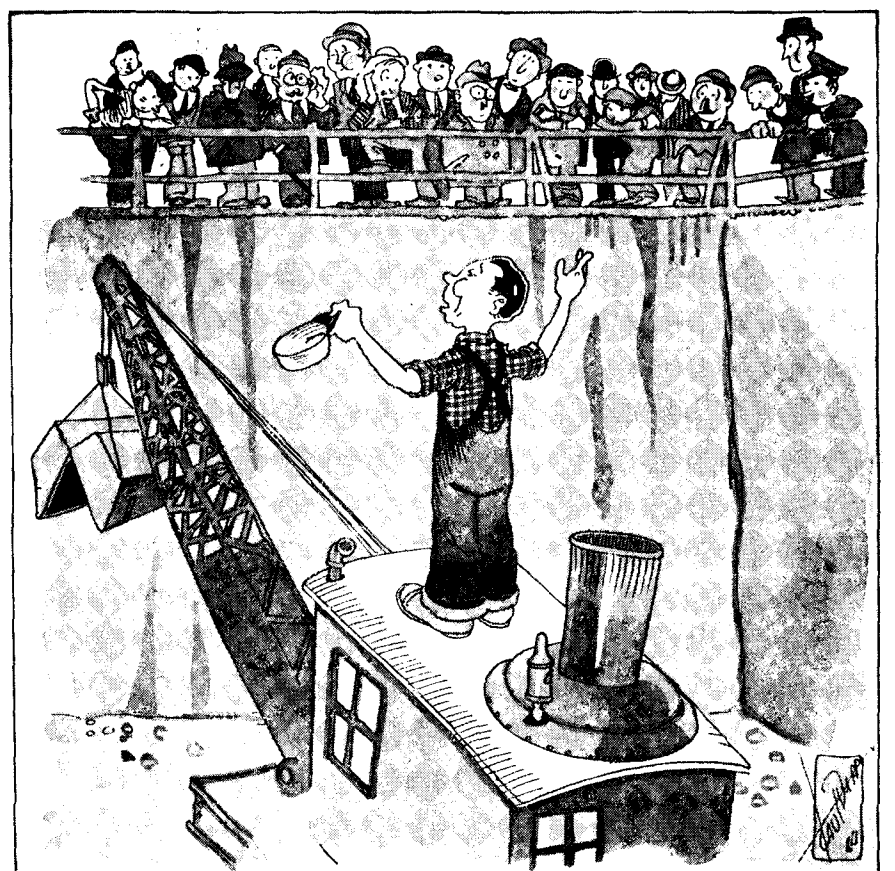
He had lingered overlong. A faint sigh of impatience swept the house, the beginning of that rebellion against strain of waiting which would soon break into noisy hand claps. And he, standing there minus even a pair of garters, had still to escape from that stage under the noses of the committee and the packing and those ten thousand eyes out beyond. . . .

TEN minutes later a young man quietly dressed, with much reddish-brown hair, stood back of the second gallery and watched the sensations which swept the theatre as that box was opened on the stage. Then even he thrilled queerly in the hush as Mastanien stepped down to the footlights, a photograph in his hand.

" . . . You have all seen Mr. Valdez' complete disappearance. . . . We are as much in the dark as yourselves. . . . And now an added mystery, for here in Mr. Valdez' coat pocket we have found this photograph of the young woman so tremendously known, of late, as 'The Lady of Sleep.' . . ."

But Valdez himself was already fading off down those gallery stairs. He had remembered that this was the night when this Brenda Hope held her midnight séance at that huge and darkened colosseum by Hyde Park.

(To be continued next week)



"Folks, I want to thank you for the interest you have shown us while we have labored here. Your response has been exceptional. During the all too short three-week period that we have been excavating here we have drawn capacity crowds at every performance. Capacity in spite of one day's rain and the two days' exhibition across the street when the new clothing store sign was being erected.

"Those of my friends here who enjoyed seeing me put this giant steam shovel through its paces may be interested to know that we are working next week under more ideal conditions on a larger excavation at the corner of 5th and Main Streets. I thank you."

Election Year Blues

Continued from page 9

"The other three bear years were 1876, 1884 and 1896. I have already outlined what took place in 1876. In 1884 business declined from January to December without a pause. But the decline began two years earlier. A great boom had set in in 1878 and rose to the proportions of inflation by 1882. Then it started to crumble and did not finish its crumbling process for several years. I have also described what happened in 1896.

"All our other Presidential years were flourishing periods for business. The year 1868 saw business moving up.

"The same thing was true of Grant's second election in 1872. In 1880, when Garfield defeated Hancock, the rise in prosperity was extraordinary; the country fairly blossomed with good business.

"In 1892, in spite of the fact that the issue of greenbacks reappeared with the Populists and that a return of the Democracy and tariff revisions seemed inevitable, the slightly downward trend of business was halted in the summer.

Anything May Happen

"DURING the 1912 fight every circumstance seemed to conspire against business. The Democrats were filled with confidence. The star of Woodrow Wilson was rising, and he was known to favor many serious measures against prevailing business practices.

"The effects of the reactionary readjustments of 1910 and 1911 were still in evidence. The Pujo Committee was pressing its sensational money-trust investigation and the giants of Wall Street, including the elder Morgan himself, were being mercilessly grilled by Samuel Untermyer.

"Two tariff bills had passed the House and had been killed only by Presidential veto and now a Democratic President was imminent. Indictments of trust magnates and dissolution suits were the order of the day. The meat packers were put on trial and the sugar barons were haled before a jury. The New Haven Railroad crash came, followed by the indictment of Mellen, president of the road. The locomotive engineers threatened a strike, and got a pay raise, and the firemen followed with a threat to quit. The coal mines began to seethe with strike demands. Under all these influences industry and trade suffered at first. But again, as the campaign swung into full tempo, up went business again.

"And so anything may happen in a Presidential year. We may have good times or bad times. But the political campaign ordinarily has nothing to do with it. The forces at work in the business world; the failures and the flourishes of the crops; the rise and fall of production, controlled by a multitude of factors; the movements of gold; sometimes the folly and the daring of large adventurers; the appearance of new inventions—all these and many more influences combine to mold business in Presidential years as well as in all others.

"But when business is poor men are apt to look around for any very prominent and conspicuous force in evidence to blame it on. And of course if it happens to be bad when the parties are lining up for their quadrennial battle, why, the election gets the blame. But it so happens that business has been good oftener than it has been bad in these election years.

"Then, of course, politicians are to blame for some of the nonsense we hear about elections and business. We are now in the period when the political statistician makes his appearance. If the devil can quote Scripture to his purpose, he is really only an amateur compared with the stump speaker who begins to use statistics. Take a subject like unemployment. The Democrats are sure to work that overtime to prove that Coolidge prosperity is only a myth, and so Democratic statisticians will paint for us the harrowing picture of four or five million people in idleness.

"The Republicans, on the other hand, eager to support the tradition of Republican prosperity, will just as loudly decry the notion of unemployment. Their statisticians have already fixed the number out of work at one fourth or one fifth the number assigned by the Democrats.

"Put a Democrat in the White House and a sheriff at your factory door!" cry the Republicans. "Elect a Republican President, and big business will go on eating up little businesses!" say the Democrats.

"Politicians of both parties will be promising disaster to the farmer if their respective candidates are not elected. One set of orators will prophesy trouble if we do not modify the tariff, and another set will threaten doom if we do not preserve and boost it. The truth about the matter is there will be no doom and no disaster, and no sensible business man thinks so. Business is better organized now to withstand the injurious interference of politicians than ever before.

"We now have the Federal Reserve Act to protect us against money stringencies in any particular region or industry. We have the new system of hand-to-mouth buying in the merchandising world, under which dealers, instead of stocking up with huge stores of goods, buy close to their immediate needs and thus are protected from being caught with a lot of unsalable merchandise. Moreover, we have the modern system of research.

"A huge machine has been set up in America to keep the business man informed about the real facts of trade. A highly uninformed politician making a stump speech cannot now frighten an intelligent business man with a lot of oratorical bogies. The business man spends a lot of money on experts who supply him with facts instead of hokum. And he knows. At least the big business men do. And the sooner little business men imitate the big ones in this respect the better off they will be.

"We have had a slight business depression. And remember recession now does not mean what it once did. It doesn't mean soup kitchens, bread lines, bankruptcies, failing banks, closed factories, poverty and despair. It means that our ordinary business gait has slowed up a little. But we have passed the peak of that.

"Business is now moving into a better phase. It is moving slowly but quite confidently and surely to a higher level. The upswing should be in full blast by the early fall or late summer.

Business Will Be Ahead

"A GROUP of manufacturers comprising 1,078 companies have just completed a survey of employment in their mills. Not only has employment increased, but it is now better than it was at this time last year. I think that is fairly representative of American industry now.

"But what the business man must remember is this—that while here and there people are out of work, the great bulk of our people are at work and that THE WAGES OF THOSE EMPLOYED ARE GREATER THAN THEY HAVE EVER BEEN BEFORE BOTH IN ACTUAL DOLLARS AND IN PURCHASING POWER; that these people are also secure in their jobs; that this employment is on the increase and that the purchasing power of the nation is on the increase. The foolish business man will let this old bogey about politics scare him. The wise one will disregard it and look only at the economic facts. HE WILL GO AFTER THE BUSINESS AND GET IT BECAUSE IT IS THERE.

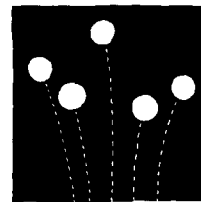
"In this campaign there are no seriously disturbing economic or financial issues, and business is not troubling itself very much which way things go. The conventions will meet in June, and the campaign will be in full swing by September. But business will be ahead of politics. It will be in full swing first."

When the world's
greatest tennis stars
battle for supremacy



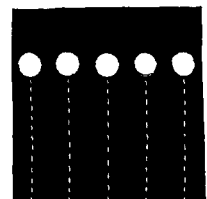
They play the ball that's
chosen for
Davis Cup Matches!

CHAMPIONS know that tennis balls which are not uniform can put a tremendous handicap upon their play. That is why the Wright & Ditson ball is used by the masters of the game. These stars know that whether they play it in May or September, in Forest Hills or Los Angeles, every Wright & Ditson ball will bound, feel and fly alike. It is the most uniform tennis ball ever created.



Ordinary tennis balls aren't uniform. In the official drop test, one will have too much bound, another too little. Stroke them in the same manner and they will fly and act differently. One will feel light off the racket, another heavy. You will have to change the speed and timing of your stroke to counteract this variance. Obviously you cannot play uniformly good tennis with them.

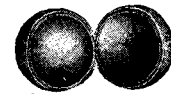
But you do not get this variance in Wright & Ditson tennis balls—you get *absolute uniformity*! In the drop test, every Wright & Ditson ball bounds *exactly alike*. In actual play, every Wright & Ditson ball flies alike, acts alike, feels alike off the racket. There's not a hair's-weight of difference in a thousand Wright & Ditson tennis balls. There *can't* be. An *automatic* process makes one Wright & Ditson ball exactly like another. No other tennis ball has such amazing uniformity!



For 37 years the Wright & Ditson Championship ball has been adopted for National championships—and for all Davis Cup matches played in this country since 1900. It helps champions play uniformly good tennis, it will help your game, too. And it costs no more than other tennis balls—50c each. *Demand it!* Buy the Wright & Ditson tennis ball from your tennis professional, or at your favorite sporting goods or department store.

HERE'S ANOTHER

great feature!



Every Wright & Ditson ball reaches you as fresh and as lively as when it left the factory. And it is kept fresh by an air-retaining inner-lining.

Air can't seep out of it—the ball holds its liveliness for an entire season's play! And every Wright & Ditson ball bounds the maximum legal limit allowed a legal ball—58 inches!

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The Thunder God

Continued from page 19



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Brander's trail to see if he'd act on your information, which, by the way, you had no business to give him, because in so doing you betrayed one of your husband's professional secrets and, I imagine, that is something he will not forgive."

She nodded acquiescence. Full well she knew Whitton knew whereof he spoke.

"You were in too great a hurry to get rid of Julie in order to marry Brander," he continued musingly. "Indecent haste. Of course, as I once assured you, I am entirely in favor of your divorcing Julie, because when you have passed out of his life I know where he will find happiness. But I dislike your callous way of going about it, my dear. Why did you attempt service by publication?"

"I didn't know where to find Julie, and I would have had to serve him in the state of Nevada if personal service was to be attained. Three months' service by publication in a weekly paper published in the county where suit is brought is legal."

"Provided you do not know where your husband is. But that is not true. You do know where he is."

"He is somewhere in the wooded wilderness of Oregon. My letters are addressed to him at this office."

"You made affidavit to that effect, of course. Theoretically you did not know where Julie was, but actually you did. You had means of ascertaining. So I'm afraid the judge will look askance at your suit when he learns the details. And I'm sure he will when I take the stand and—well, he'll realize you were trying to slip one over on your husband. I have a copy of your divorce complaint. It will stand up in Reno, feeble as it is, provided the charges of incompatibility and mental cruelty are not combated. You have in your employ now a maid you formerly employed in Los Angeles. I suppose she'll be your corroborative witness?"

She saw she could not fence with the man, that it was far better to be direct with him. "How long have you known of my divorce action, Ben?" she queried.

"This office had news of it the day after it was filed."

"But you didn't tell Julie?"

"Not necessary. Time enough when he returns. Have you killed that notice in the Argus?"

"I have ordered its discontinuance."

"I'll know for certain when the next issue is printed. By the way, when you return to your Reno apartment you will find your letters from Jake still there. All I required was photostatic copies."

"You devil!"

"Keno!"

SHE recognized the allusion and flushed with mortification. "Well, what do you want me to do?" she quavered.

"Withdraw your suit and come home. Be back at that hotel where Julie left you when he went north, and be back there the day after tomorrow. Julie will be home in a week, and I want him to find you there upon his return."

She was more dangerously near hysterics now than she had ever been. "Oh, Ben," she pleaded, "for heaven's sake, don't interfere. I know my action will be a great shock to Julie, but he'll get over it. He doesn't really love me any more than I love him. Our marriage has been a tragic, hopeless mess from the beginning, and you know it."

"If Jake Brander hadn't come into your life, would you have planned to divorce Julie just the same?"

She nodded.

"Sure?"

"Absolutely. We are hopelessly incompatible, Ben, and under such a condition I would prefer to make my own living to having him support me."

"Of course you could do with all the alimony you could squeeze out of him," Whitton sneered. "This alimony thing is a frightful injustice. A woman will not make any decent, fair effort to promote happiness in her married life, yet, after casting her man aside she still

clings to him and makes him support her—in idleness, if possible. I agree that in the case where divorce comes after long years of marriage and the wife is too old to support herself, or has lost the ability to or is not equipped to, ample alimony is just. But in the case of a young woman like yourself—"

"Oh, don't preach," she begged.

"The point is well taken. I have no right to preach. Forgive me. Well, one more question and I am through. Are you deluding yourself with the dream that you can possibly be happy with Jake Brander, that you, being his fourth wife, will be immune to the matrimonial failure that has distinguished his efforts to date? Do you think he is an intelligent man? An honorable man? An honorable man would not deliberately set about the seduction of another's wife, you know. Mercedes, I tell you you're making a terrible mistake. Your life with Julie may not be quite as happy as you desire, but I assure you life with Jake Brander will eventually prove a nightmare."

"Suppose you mind your own business, Ben?"

"My friend's happiness is some of my business, and I'll not have that fathead, Brander, and you triumph over him until—well, until I give the word. It is in my power to make the going hard and slippery for you both. Remember, you betrayed a professional secret of mine to him, and, in the circumstances under which you learned this secret, you were obliged, in honor, to regard it

as your secret too. He's a crooked dog, and if I can I'm going to tie a can to his tail."

"Must I remain and listen to this?"

"I suppose not. Mercedes, if you thought Julie would be a rich man in a few years, would that make any difference in your mental attitude toward him?"

"Julie will never be rich," she affirmed.

HE SAW that it was useless to attempt an argument, since she was one who would always argue abstractedly, always beg the question.

"It would make a difference, of course. There's nothing wrong with your happiness that a liberal allowance would not cure. But it wouldn't cure Julie's unhappiness. Mercedes, right now Julian Grannis is quite a rich man."

"How rich?" She was mildly interested.

"A trifle over half a million. Beyond the reach of the wolf of want. And when he perfects his ideas and makes them commercially practicable—"

"Julie can never be happy with me—and I want him to be happy, Ben."

"Will you not go back to him and make an honest, diligent effort to make him happy? Study him, Mercedes. Make a business of this married state, for really it is a matter that requires much study, much sacrifice, much understanding, much tolerance and much forgiveness. Go back to Julie and bear a few children for him—"

NAMEOGRAPHS

THE Nameographers have outdone themselves this week. There are some mighty ingenious jobs on this page. Still, you don't have to be as clever as this to get in the national game. Try your luck and send the results to Nameograph Editor, Collier's Weekly, 250 Park Avenue, New York City. We pay \$5 each for acceptable Nameographs. And did we mention that you can get a flabbergasting book on hitherto unpublished ones from your bookseller or from Reilly & Lee, Chicago, Ill., for \$1.35?



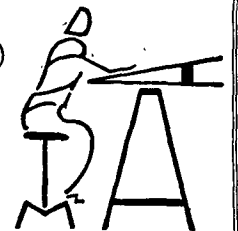
"Sea Horse," by Collville N. Smythe, 3030 82d St., S. E., Portland, Ore.



"Skater," by Marian A. Stuart, Skaneateles, N. Y.



"Gorilla," by Harry C. Thompson, 335 Walnut Ave., Elgin, Ill.



"Draftsman," by Fred A. Mammen, 1520 Leland Ave., New York City



"Flapper," by Miss Dorothy E. Wilson, 15 Cutting Apts., Ann Arbor, Mich.



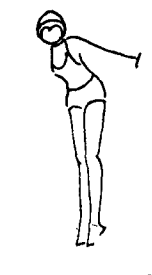
"Balloon Vendor," by G. L. Power, 4015 New Hampshire Ave., N. W., Washington, D. C.



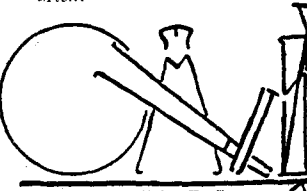
"Lantern," by Evangeline V. Coates, 1719 San Lorenzo, Berkeley, Calif.



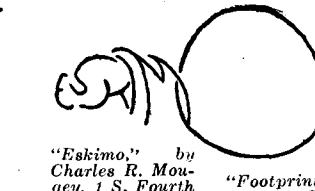
"Arabian," by Louis V. Matamek, 602 Congress St., Schenectady, N. Y.



"A Bather," by Loretta Fontenrose, 1310 Carlotta Ave., Berkeley, Calif.



"Chemistry," by E. C. Dailey, R. F. D. 1, Bound Brook, N. J.



"Footprint," by Charles R. Moughey, 1 S. Fourth St., Columbus, O.



"Footprint," by Harry Garden, 2405 14 St., Lubbock, Tex.