

# The Troublesome Kingdom

*Sir Jasper Slane plays a dangerous game, with the stakes a crown and a king's ransom*

JASPER SLANE lowered his Times as his fellow-passenger addressed him. He had no wish to seem lacking in courtesy, but he had all the Englishman's desire to read his newspaper at the earliest possible moment

of the day, and without interruption. "A beautiful country of yours," the stranger remarked, waving his hand patronizingly out of the window. "I like it very much."

Slane murmured his gratification, and prepared to settle down again to the reading of a spirited debate in the House of Commons. His vis-à-vis in the carriage, however, had other ideas.

"What I like so much about England is this," he continued earnestly. "Wherever one travels there are so many like you who go about making games and sport."

Slane was in golfing attire, having played that morning at Rye, and being now on his way back to town. He laid down his newspaper. If the man was a foreigner, he must not be given a wrong impression of an Englishman's manners. There was something a little intriguing, too, in the melancholy-eyed, olive-

skinned young man with his close-cropped black military mustache, his air of a somewhat faded elegance.

"We don't find quite so much time for sport as we used to," Slane confided. "Life moves on a little faster nowadays. I have been down at Rye for a week-end's golf."

"Golf," the young man repeated. "I have not golf. I ride the horse most days. You find I speak English good, yes? I was educated at your Oxford."

"YOU speak very well," Slane assured him hastily. "Much better, I am quite sure, than I could speak your language."

"Mine is difficult," the young man acknowledged, with a little sigh of self-satisfaction. "I learn languages very much. It is necessary for me."

"You travel a great deal?"

"I must travel," was the somewhat disconsolate reply. "I am what you call an exile."

"Bad luck!" Slane murmured. "What is your nationality?"

The young man sighed, but he seemed not to hear the question. He was gazing at the rows of neat villas, at the tall factory chimneys on the outskirts

of the town through which they were passing.

"So much money there is in your country!" he murmured. "So little in mine."

"You should go to America if you want to see what prosperity's really like," Slane suggested.

"It is a long way from home," the young man reflected, "and they tell me that it is a country of strange customs. But I'd like to go there some day."

He produced a gold cigarette case from his pocket, upon which was embossed what appeared to be a foreign coronet, and passed it to his neighbor, who shook his head as he was already smoking his pipe. Whereupon the young man lit a cigarette himself, and sighed once more. He was apparently in a melancholy frame of mind.

"What is your country?" Slane asked.

The foreigner looked at him for a moment a little vaguely. Then he blew away a cloud of tobacco smoke, and shook his head.

"I am here what you call incognito," he confided. "It is best that I do not speak of my country. She has misfortunes. Tell me, are you, by any chance, a friend of your Prime Minister?"

"I certainly am not," Slane declared. "I am afraid my political acquaintances are few and far between."

"That is a pity," the other regretted. "I should like to meet your Prime Minister. I should like to meet him just as I meet you—in this carriage. If I should succeed in interesting him, he might talk. Shall I tell you about your politicians?"

"Go ahead," Slane invited.

"THEY know nothing," the young man continued, awaking to a certain show of energy, "except what they read in the newspapers. They are governed by newspapers. The man who owns a newspaper is a ruler. The man who owns half-a-dozen newspapers is an emperor. England is ruled by newspapers. That is why I fear it would be no use after all if I did meet your Prime Minister. It would be better for me to meet one of your great newspaper owners, except that I know so well beforehand what he would do. He would pull me to pieces. He would pull my country to pieces. He would pull our government to pieces. There would be—hell and thunder to pay."

"They aren't all so bad as that," Slane protested good-humoredly. "Our newspaper men have to be men of brains."

"But your politicians are nincompoops," the other declared in some excitement. "The press sets them up; the





# of Selm

## By E. Phillips Oppenheim

press throws them down. They last just as long as the newspaper which supports them decrees. That is what I find out. I come to your country, and I find that out."

"Do you take an interest in the politics of your own country when you are at home?" Slane asked.

"An interest? In my own country I am nothing what count. I talk too much. It is a fault when I get a little excited. Forget what I have said, sir. You English are wonderful. You fill the position to which Germany aspired. You dominate Europe."

He relapsed into silence, and Slane picked up the Times again. At Waterloo Station the latter was not quite sure whether he would not find on the platform the uniformed attendants of some country lunatic asylum waiting

for his fellow traveler. In their place, however, a personable young man, wearing a college tie, hurried to the carriage door, welcomed his companion respectfully, and led him away toward a waiting motor car. Slane would probably have forgotten the incident of this strange foreigner altogether but for the fact that, on arriving at his house, his servant placed in his hands an official-looking document which had just arrived from the Foreign Office.

"Sir John rang up himself a few minutes ago, Sir Jasper," the man confided. "He wants to see you the moment you arrive."

Slane broke the seal upon the envelope, and glanced through the few written lines, which were merely a confirmation of the telephone message. He picked up his hat, stepped back into

the car, and was driven to Whitehall. "I came just as I was," he apologized, as he was shown into Sir John's private room.

"Quite right, my dear fellow," the other greeted him. "I wanted just a word or two with you quickly. Just home from a golfing week-end, eh?"

Slane nodded.

"I've been down at Rye. Wonderful course, but rotten weather until this morning."

SIR JOHN pushed a box of cigarettes across the table.

"I sent for you," the Minister began, "because I believe that you could help us in a little matter concerning which we are in some difficulty. There's a man over in this country from Selm—Prince Francis, as a matter of fact, the King's brother—and we very badly want to know what he's here for."

"Surely your people in X. Y. O. Department could find out all they want to know about him?" Slane queried.

"Naturally they could," the other agreed. "So could Scotland Yard. On the other hand, the young man has announced his mission here to be entirely non-political, and he is, I believe, traveling incognito. That being so, we should get into a hell of a mess if it were ever found out that we were officially concerned in prying into his doings here. I want to pry into them all the same, but I want you to do it."

"You've come to the right man," Slane observed. "I've just traveled up from Rye with him."

Sir John raised his eyebrows.

"Do you mean that?" he asked incredulously.

"Well, I traveled up with a distinguished foreigner," Slane recounted, "who told me that he had been educated at Oxford, and refused to tell me his nationality because he was traveling incognito."

THE Minister stretched out his hand toward his writing table, reached for a photograph, and passed it to his visitor. The latter nodded.

"That's the fellow," he assented. "Left him at Waterloo half-an-hour ago."

"Didn't give you any excuse for looking him up or anything of that sort, I suppose?"

"Not the slightest. On the contrary he was very civil to start with, but scarcely said good afternoon when we parted. Tempera-

mental sort of chap, I should think."

"He's supposed to be the only one of the royal family with any brains," Sir John confided. "We're in a queer sort of position with regard to Selm, Slane. God knows why, but we floated their last loan, and we're practically their only creditors. They're behindhand with their interest already, and if we have to put the screw on there'll be hell to pay for the simple reason that a country with whom it would be impossible for us to quarrel has secretly and for some unknown reason been acquiring powerful interests there. I've already sent a polite note to Prince Francis—Count Pratzto, he calls himself here—saying that although I have every desire to respect his incognito I should be glad to have an informal chat with him if he would call. His reply was civil but definite. He was here, he said, on business which precluded his discussing the affairs of his country. I want to know what that business is."

"I see," Slane murmured. "I can use M. I. X. O. Branch, I suppose, for anything I want?"

"Unofficially, certainly," Sir John assented. "Do your best, Slane, and let me hear from you as soon as possible."

SLANE, after three or four singularly unsuccessful days, during which every effort he had made to get into more intimate touch with the mysterious visitor from Selm had met with complete failure, had a stroke of luck. He met Louise Drasdaire in Bond Street, found himself promptly recognized, and invited her to dine with him that night. She accepted after only a slight hesitation.

"I come over here," she confided, "to be with a fellow countryman, who pretends to be very fond of me, but who will go nowhere because he doesn't wish to be seen. I think he comes to make some mischief. We will dine somewhere where he is not likely to be. I am tired of those small places in Soho, and hotel rooms. . . . Ciro's? Yes. I have never heard him speak of Ciro's. At nine o'clock."

So Slane, who had a man in hospital, quite properly thrown out by the servants of Prince Francis, during an uninvited visit to his study, and who was finding it exceedingly difficult to learn much of the doings of a young man who seldom left the sitting-room of the hotel where he was staying, discovered himself at last in touch with someone who could, if she would, tell him something about the activities of this elusive personage. She happened, however, to be an old flame, and showed a distinct preference for talking of more personal things. Slane was feeling a little in despair as the evening passed on without any result.

"Why are you so interested in this Prince Francis?" she asked, after one of his seemingly casual inquiries. "He is, I assure you, a very dull young man. He has no money either—unless these Russian friends decide to help him."

"To help him in what?" Slane inquired carelessly.

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Who can tell? Something to do with his country. He hopes that they will help to place him once more upon the throne of Selm, I think."

"But what on earth does he want to be back on the throne for?" Slane demanded. "It's a miserable, half-starved country."

"Ecoutez, mon ami," she confided, holding his arm, "this you must not tell.



As Slane rose to his feet, he kicked him on the shins. That was the end of the Prince for the next quarter of an hour

Illustrated by  
T. D. Skidmore



Perhaps, if I knew more, I should not tell you anything—but there is something in Selm that is precious, something in which the Russians might participate if they got Francis back. And now, ask me no more. You are a nice man. I like you very much, but I do not like to tell stories about my friends. I give Francis up when you will, but we will talk no more about him. I do not know why I came to England with him. He is so jealous one has no liberty, and these visits to the shops, always they are coming, but they do not arrive. I tell him that I shall go away with his Russian friend who loves me. Oh, la, la!"

It certainly was "la, la!" Prince Francis, with one of his Russian companions, had paused in front of their table. The Prince was very angry, and a little drunk. He addressed Mademoiselle in fluent and abusive French. Slane he at first ignored, then, suddenly recognizing him, he completely forgot Mademoiselle.

"It was you, you spy, who traveled with me to London!" he exclaimed. "It is your men whom my servants find always about the place. Soon now you try to learn about me from Mademoiselle, eh? You are a *cochon*!"

Slane easily parried the Prince's ill-directed blow, and held him at arm's length. The young man was infuriated though, and as Slane rose to his feet, he kicked him on the shins. That, for the next quarter of an hour, was the end of the Prince, who was sent hurtling into the middle of the floor by a straight left-hander. There was commotion, a great deal of talk, and explanations, and finally, the evening being a purposeless one so far as he was concerned, Slane consented to leave. Mademoiselle, offered her choice, very much to Slane's relief, elected to remain. . . .

AT HAMPSTEAD he found at last the report, the obtaining of which had cost him so much trouble. He rang up Sir John, whom he was fortunate enough to find at the St. James Club.

"I'm on the trail," Slane confided. "I'm off to Selm tomorrow."

"The devil you are!" the Minister rejoined. "What on earth is there to be done there?"

"More than here anyway," Slane assured him. "I shan't be able to go within a mile of the Prince again. I was giving his lady friend dinner at Ciro's tonight when he came in and made a scene. After that, I'm not a damned bit of use here, but I think I

may be in Selm. I'm catching the eleven-o'clock train. I want a large sum of money, or a credit will do, a diplomatic passport, and an X. Y. O. cipher."

"Can't you be a little more explicit?" Sir John begged.

"I'd rather not," Slane admitted frankly. "I'm working on an idea. If I'm right, I think I'll be able to save you a great deal of trouble; if I'm wrong, I'm unofficial, and I shan't do any harm. Could we leave it at that?"

The Minister hesitated, but only for a moment.

"Very good, Slane. Have it your own way," he decided. "There's just one thing, though. When you get to Selm, you must go straight to the Embassy. Houlden's not a bad fellow, though he's a trifle out of date. And remember, Charles is the man we want to back. He's a fool, but he's honest. Francis, as we happen to know, was philandering with a Turkish envoy before these people from Leningrad sent for him."

"Right-o!" Slane replied. "From the little I have seen of Francis, I should say you were right." . . .

SO, AT eleven o'clock on the following morning Slane steamed out of Victoria Station upon what was for him rather a novel form of adventure.

Exactly nine days later, a mud-caked, dusty, disheveled-looking figure, unshaven, with torn clothes, and unmentionable linen, limped out of a broken-down touring car in front of the English Embassy at Pratz, the capital of Selm, and was scornfully directed by a footman, who answered the door, to the office quarters. Robinson, the First Secretary, however, who was crossing the hall, had an inspiration. He came forward gasping.

"It can't be—is this Sir Jasper Slane?" he asked.

"What's left of me," Slane admitted weakly. "Can I sit on a chair I shan't spoil, and have a double whisky-and-soda?"

Slane knew a few moments of supreme luxury. A whisky-and-soda arrived as though by magic. The supercilious footman kneeled upon the floor and cut away his boots. He was led to a lavatory and plunged his hands and arms and face into hot water. His collar dropped away from him. His clothes followed. They brought him a warm, long dressing gown, took him back to Robinson's room, and refilled his glass. Sir Robert was there by that time.

"My dear Slane!" he exclaimed. "I am Houlden, you know. They sent me a long dispatch about you. Where on earth have you been?"

Slane was feeling like a man again.

"I tackled this job my own way, Sir Robert," he confessed. "I may have been wrong. I may have been right. I had a hint about the western frontier, and I didn't try it. I came in from the north, bought a car and hired a man who understood a little French, and I have come through the districts I wanted to visit. Everything turned out just about as I expected. What we want to arrange now, as soon as ever I can get some clothes, is an audience."

"We can have that any time you like," Sir Robert assured him. "Your clothes are all here. They telephoned me from the station that they were holding the trunk, so I sent for it at once."

"You were quite right about the possibility of trouble at the western frontier, Sir Jasper," Robinson confided. "One of the only first-class passengers, on the day you should have arrived, was shot there by a soldier on guard. They swore it was an accident, but no one believed them. Since then, there's been an extra passport examination every day, and the trains have never been less than an hour late."

"Whatever your mission here may be," Sir Robert observed, "it doesn't seem to have made you popular with the military party."

"I've discovered that for myself," Slane acknowledged. "I'm afraid I had to shoot a man coming through the Bunja Pass—one if not two. They pretended to be bandits, but I'm pretty sure that they were soldiers of a sort."

"I shouldn't be surprised," Sir Robert reflected. "Ferastor—he is the head of the military party here—is a thoroughly unscrupulous fellow—kill you as soon as look at you if he wanted you out of the way. Come along, Slane, and I'll show you your room. After dinner, we'll have a talk, and Robinson shall arrange for the audience."

AT a little before the appointed hour he descended into the drawing-room. There he received his first shock, for, as the stately major-domo announced him, the only visible occupant of the room—a woman both expectant and impatient—rose to her feet. Slane stood rooted to the spot.

"Louise!" he exclaimed.

She patted the seat by her side on the divan. With a little gesture of the hand she waved away the servants. The

room was curiously shaped. The recess in which they sat was deserted. From the main portion came the sound of voices. To all intents and purposes, however, they were alone.

"What are you doing here?" Slane demanded.

"And what are you?" she flashed out. "I knew you were lying at Ciro's the other night. That is why I followed you. It is a pity you did not stay on the Orient express."

"On the whole," he murmured, "I think I am just as well pleased that I didn't."

SHE swallowed what seemed to be a torrent of words, and struggled for composure.

"What has Francis done to you?" she demanded. "Are you here to bolster up this poor effigy of royalty? What have you to do with all this business? Everything was arranged—everything was well arranged—and then you come! Where have you been since you arrived in Selm?"

"Does a man," Slane asked, "make a confidant of his enemy?"

"I do not wish to be your enemy," she declared. "I wish to be your friend—anything you would have me be—but I want to be Queen of Selm."

A servant appeared hesitatingly in the background. Slane, welcoming the interruption, rose promptly to his feet.

"You make me forget my manners," he confided. "I must pay my respects to my hostess."

Again Louise made an effort to control herself. She rose to her feet and passed by his side into the more important part of the salon. Lady Houlden—a rather tired, fair-haired lady, who did her duty by her husband but preferred Paris to Selm—welcomed him in lukewarm fashion. There were no other guests except Robinson.

Dinner was rather an impressive meal. Notwithstanding its somewhat cellar-like appearance, the dining-room of the old palace possessed a certain air of magnificence, and, after his four days of absolute privation, Slane thoroughly enjoyed his return to civilization. All the time, however, there remained the problem of Louise. Her eyes seldom left his face. When her hostess rose, she paused by his chair and laid her hand for a moment upon his shoulder.

"Will you talk to me for five minutes, please, Sir Jasper, before you go to the palace tomorrow?"

"I am a little afraid of you," he confessed, stooping down and looking into her eyes.

(Continued on page 77)

## The Inventions of Professor Lucifer G. Butts, A.K.

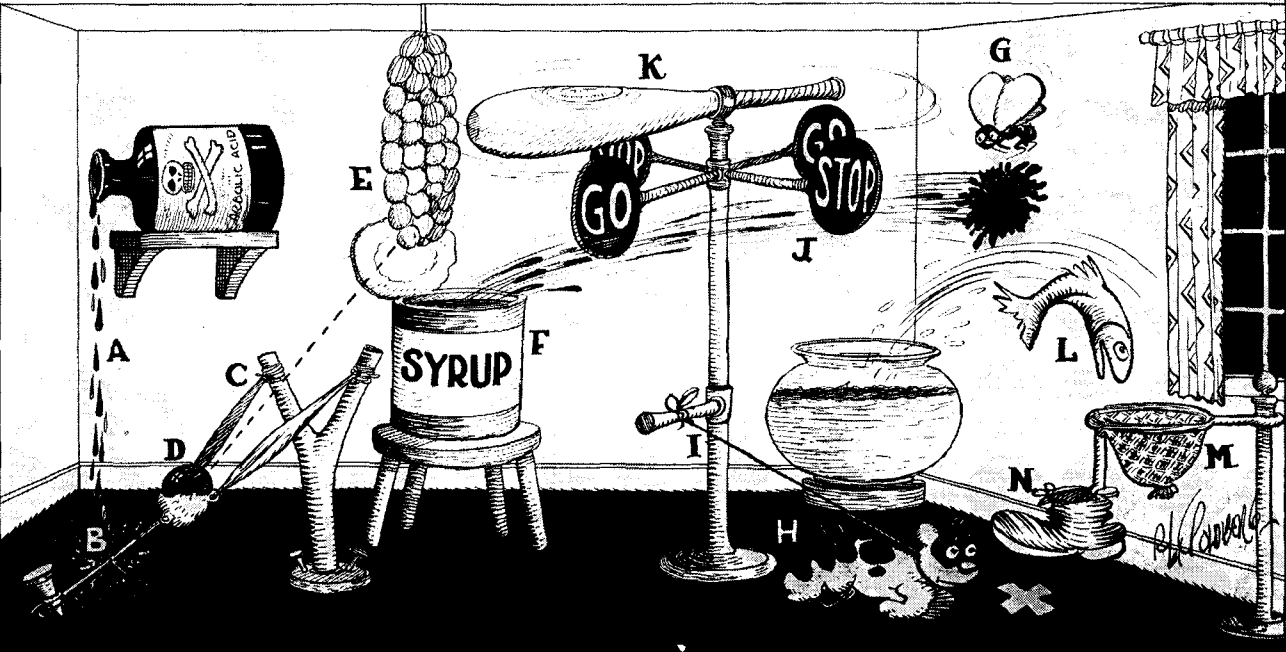
By RUBE GOLDBERG

A SAFE FALLS ON THE HEAD OF PROFESSOR BUTTS AND KNOCKS OUT AN IDEA FOR HIS LATEST SIMPLE FLY SWATTER.

CARBOLIC ACID (A) DRIPS ON STRING (B) CAUSING IT TO BREAK AND RELEASE ELASTIC OF BEAN SHOOTER (C) WHICH PROJECTS BALL (D) INTO BUNCH OF GARLIC (E) CAUSING IT TO FALL INTO SYRUP CAN (F) AND SPLASH SYRUP VIOLENTLY AGAINST SIDE WALL. FLY (G) BUZZES WITH GLEE AND GOES FOR SYRUP, HIS FAVORITE DISH. BUTLER-DOG (H) MISTAKES HUM OF FLY'S WINGS FOR DOOR BUZZER AND RUNS TO MEET VISITOR, PULLING ROPE (I) WHICH TURNS STOP-GO SIGNAL (J) AND CAUSES BASEBALL BAT (K) TO SOCK FLY WHO FALLS TO FLOOR UNCONSCIOUS.

AS FLY DROPS TO FLOOR PET TROUT (L) JUMPS FOR HIM, MISSES, AND LANDS IN NET (M). WEIGHT OF FISH FORCES SHOE (N) DOWN ON FALLEN FLY AND PUTS HIM OUT OF THE RUNNING FOR ALL TIME.

IF THE FISH CATCHES THE FLY, THE SHOE CAN BE USED FOR CRACKING NUTS.







By  
Grantland Rice

*Without disparaging the mentalities of some of our best athletes Mr. Rice explains why they keep right on fighting after having their skulls fractured. They simply hadn't sense enough, just then, to stay down*

## Dutiful but Numb

WHEN Jack Sharkey nailed Tommy Loughran between the eyes and Loughran got up at the count of five to fumble his way along the ropes asking Referee Magnolia to get him a chair, the episode seemed incredible to a big part of the crowd. Thousands of spectators figured that any cove able to get up and walk around ought to be able to keep on fighting, or at least to keep on trying. They overlooked the fact that a man can receive a certain type of head injury in boxing, football, baseball or other hard competition that will stop his entire mental system for the time being.

As far as one can see he may be unhurt and completely normal. He may be able to talk and walk. And yet he may not have any idea where he is or what it is all about. This is the fix that Loughran was in.

Two years ago Chick Meehan of New York University had a star quarter-back named Connor. He could run, pass, kick and handle a team up to any standard. About that time N. Y. U. met Colgate in a battle that ended 0-0.

"What was the matter with your passing game?" I asked Meehan the next day, N. Y. U. having depended almost entirely on a running game.

"That's one of the queerest things I've ever known in football," Chick replied. "I waited all through the first two periods for Connor to pass, but he didn't. During the intermission I asked him why he hadn't thrown the ball. He told me he was waiting to use passes in the last two periods. He talked as

rationally as anyone possibly could.

"I kept waiting all through the next two periods for the pass attack to start. I saw members of the team go up and talk to him, only to have him drive them away. He was the best man on my team and I did not want to take him out. He was playing hard physical football. He was running and tackling and blocking beautifully but his headwork on calling plays was all off.

"After the game I talked to him again in the dressing-room and found that he knew nothing that had happened on the field. He thought men were in the game who were on the bench. He thought he had thrown a flock of passes. I had him examined and found he had received a concussion from a hard blow at the base of the brain and it was two days before he could get his head cleared. And even then he remembered nothing about the Colgate game."

### Faking a Pass-Out

Aurelio Herrera, the Mexican, one of the stiffest punchers for his weight that ever lived, once caught Bat Nelson on the chin with a smashing right. Nelson landed on the back of his head and the lights went out. This was in the fifth round. He scrambled up and charged back in. But his mind was a total blank for the next five or six rounds. After the fight he was unable to remember anything that happened, where he was, whom he was fighting, or what he did until his head suddenly cleared fifteen or twenty minutes later and he knocked

Herrera out. He could tell you what happened through the first four rounds and the final round, but the rest of it was a total blank.

It was during a Crimson-Blue game a few years ago that Harvard's team doctor rushed on the field where Charley Buell lay, apparently knocked out.

Buell had just taken a Yale punt and run it back a good thirty yards to Yale's eleven-yard line. The Blue tackler who hit him put everything he had into the dive, and Buell lay stretched out as stiff as a log.

As Tom Thorp, the referee, came up, Buell opened one eye and winked. Then he closed his eyes again. The team doctor asked Buell what day it was, what team he was playing against and several other questions. Buell answered a few and finally told the doctor to go away and let him think. As it happened, the Harvard quarter-back could have gotten up at once, but he wanted to take his time in mapping out the next two or three plays to carry the ball across.

In just two plays Buell sent Owen over for a touchdown. The first was a fake forward pass and the next a crack at the line where Buell told Owen to wait until the lines locked and then dive over. They were not plays that a cracked or battered skull could have figured out.

Al Mamaux, once a big-league pitcher, was hit in the head by a thrown ball and from that moment his mind was a total blank. Yet for five innings he not only had all his allotment of speed and



curves, but his control was perfect. He held the opposing team to one hit while working in a mental fog.

"I have never had the slightest recollection of anything that happened," he said. "No one knew I had been hurt or dazed. All I know is what they told me later and the box score I saw next day. I read a full description of each inning I pitched but it might as well have been someone else in another state."

Knute Rockne of Notre Dame tells of one of his men who was hurt but who got up. Knute did not like the queer look in the boy's eyes. When Rockne started to take him out the player kicked.

"I never felt better in my life," he said. "I haven't even got a headache."

### Knute Knows Best

Rockne had too hard a schedule to take any chances.

"What day is it?" he asked, "and what team are we playing?"

"It's Tuesday," the battered athlete answered, "and we're playing the Army."

The Notre Dame coach gently but firmly led his half-back off the field.

Few who saw it can ever forget the insane grin that came over Jess Willard's face when Dempsey dropped him with a punch that shattered his cheek bone. Willard at that moment was as crazy as a loon and yet something forced a queer-looking smile to his lips at the idea of a man sixty pounds lighter and six inches shorter spilling him with one wallop.

Willard, who had the stamina of two men, kept getting up mechanically, but he had no definite idea where he was.

It is Jimmy Bronson's contention that Tunney's brain had cleared completely at the count of four (the second count), because he followed instructions by watching his corner for the signal.

"Gene might have looked at any one of 80,000 people that night," says Bronson, "but he looked directly at me."

By this time, however, eight had been counted, which would have been close figuring if the referee had stopped at ten.