A BASEBALL ROMANCE

BY W. A. PHELON

with some twenty other young-ctice baseball playing until dark. Wilkins' stenographers is soon to

CHAPTER III—As outcome of Brock-tt's cipher, the ball player and Solano re engaged by government for mysteri-us mission. Yazimoto, mysterious Jap. CHAPTER IV-Brockett falls into Yazi-moto's trap, a fight follows, Brockett coming out on top; Messenger McKane

CHAPTER VI-Yazin

CHAPTER IX—Brockett and Solano arrive in New York and run into a Chinese Tong war; rescued by a white man.

CHAPTER X—The place of refuge bund to be a trap; find themselves pris-mers of Yazimoto. Kelly to rescue, nulches Jap out of \$10,000. CHAPTER XI-Kelly turns the mon

CHAPTER XII—Brockett and Solano have encounter with tough gang, but are protected by Kelly's men.

CHAPTER XIV-At Detroit the mes-sengers go to ball game, receive hiero-rlyphs in mysterious manner and depart

CHAPTER XXI—Mysteriously reason another hieroglyphic message, nessengers board a train for the V and are later arrested by bogus Arka

CHAPTER XXIII—The genuine sheriff rrests Baron Zollerr, and the boys re-ume their journey.

Brockett and Solano, their journey of a laundry presser. "I want you, more more inter-spted, lost no time first," he thundered, "and then I want n lamentations or vain objections. that gang that you hired to bluff the The circumstances were hardly suit-able. They struck out through the put you where the fleas won't bite Arkansas hills, making remarkably good time, and doing all their com-plaining inwardly. Baron Zollern and the epithets most appropriate to that noble German could wait, but the sher-iff of Little Rock was hardly likely

to do much waiting. After hustling along through the underbrush for perhaps twenty minutes, the sounds of pursuit died away to a far-off mur-mur, and the fugitives took breathing space, though still pushing doggedly Clear of Little Rock's outskirts, the

boys made sharp detours around several farm houses, and even dodged sundry negro cabins. Coming up to the farther on, they were about to skulk by under cover of a hedge, when Solano suddenly halted.

"Ye are they return forthwith and give whatever evidence they could against the German noble. "Ah jes" bout rode a haws to death, gemmen." protested the block men."

"We need something—at least, I think we'll need it awfully soon," exclaimed the Cuban, "and I think we can get it at this house. Come right along—no time to lose, but this is something we've really got to have." A pleasant-faced old lady answered

o's knock, and the Cuban, the utmost politeness, apologized for the intrusion. "We would not have disturbed you," he continued, "but for the fact that we are quite a ways from a store, and we really must have some pepper. Could you favor us with a little pepper—red, if possible? We are camping out on the river-bank, and pepper is one of the things you simply can't do without when you are | cell cooking in the woods."

The old lady, beaming upon tho good-looking, gentlemanly youngsters, hastened to present them with a liberal quantity of flery cayenne, and then urged them to sit down and rest With polite excuses Solano explained the necessity of a quick re-turn to the imaginary camp, and they trotted off, Solano exultant, Brockett deeply mystified.

deeply mystified.

"What on earth is the pepper for, Ramon?" he demanded.

"Dogs," replied Solano. "If I know anything about these people they'll have hounds on our track at any moment. Long ago, when Cuban slaves hid in the canebrake, they used to stop the hounds with a little pepper, stop the hounds with a little pepper, used at the right time and place, and the stories I had heard came back to

"That seems to have worked pretty

AND SURPRISE FELL TO THE FLOOR.

from a train and was gazing blandly

double-fisted and irascible individual.

long from the station platform.

CHAPTER XXIII.

men," protested the black man, "an' when Ah couldn't ride him no longeh

in dis canebrake Ah done hiked suth-

in' pow'ful to cotch yo'. De sheriff, he 'lowed dat he'd gib me \$5 if Ah

who had been forcibly relieved of sun-

"Right smart sort of crook, Dutchman," said the sheriff, half-ad-

miringly. "Found out, somehow, which road you boys would take. Knew mighty well that if he sent any

fake wires to me I'd do a little in-

vestigating before I acted any, and so he makes up his own law forces. Gets Tom Tarbrow, a fellow we ran out of here two years ago—must have been living in Chicago ever since—to play

ed up. Says he don't blame you boys none for peppering your tracks, but he'll get satisfaction out of the Ger-man or out of Tom Tarbrow. Says his dawgs won't be no good again for six mouths. maybe never."

lively.

tle Rock.

on the unaccustomed scenes of Lit-

The events of the next few hours seemed like some sort of a welrd, wildly mingled dream. Brockett and Solono found a stretch of rocky ground near the river bank, and ran briskly on this for several minutes. Then, on this for several minutes. Then, descending to the water's edge, they skirted the river a little ways, while the noise of the pack grew momentarily nearer and stronger. They came to a little creek, running at right angles to the river, and crossed it, wading knee-deep in the brown water. Then they struck off into the woods. At the very edge of the jungle was a big boulder, a relic of some glacial silde of centuries ago. They climbed this rock, and took a long jump from its summit, after carefully spreading pepper all over the flat top of the stone. The deep footprints made as they landed from their leap were sprinkled with cayenne. Cayenne covered their fracks into the woods for the next half mile, and when they

knitted his brows, thoughtfully.

"That's something of a poser," admitted the official. "If you lads would stay over and testify we could give them plenty of chances to work out a nice long sentence—specially Tom Tarbrow. Impersonating an' officer isn't a healthy trick 'round these parts, and we'd fix Tom proper. You say, though, that you have to be on your way right sudden, and I won't detain you. Reckon I can send Tom and his fellows up for a little while without your help—the testimony of the conductor and of Pod Morgan will just about settle them. I'll be cussed if I know-what-to-do-with the Dutchman, the next half mile, and when they leaped a slender stream they peppered the spoor on each side of the water. Then they raced on, tired almost to the dropping point, staggering, stumbling now and then, but keeping their nerve and spirit undiminished. At last a railroad cut appeared before them. They crossed it, climbed the bank on the farther side and burrowed know what to do with the Dutchman,

"The baron? He's a spy of the German government, and one of the kaiser's most valuable agents," Solano

weeds. There they lay, gasping and puffing, while their lungs seemed bursting through their ribs. And from the dim distance, borne upon the breeze, came faintly the howls of hounds in bitter agony, and the shouts of baffled men in fruitless rage. "That's a certain cinch," said the sheriff "but that won't get us much right now. We know who he is; we've got some goods on him, and we've taken a lot of choice credentials away from him. Wish it was wartime—we'd soon settle a polecat like him. In the war-time we used to catch Yankee spies 'round these woods now and then—and there was no formality at all. Not a bit of formality. Just a tree-limb and a halter. If we only had a nice excuse like those "That's a certain cinch," said the well," grimly commented Solano.
"That particular pack of dogs won't
be in shape to trail anybody for a week to come. If they want to fol-low us with hounds, they'll have to send back for another batch, and by only had a nice excuse, like those times, son, we'd tend to your German. As it is, I'm afraid we can't do much. the time they arrive we can be some distance on our way. If they try to track us without dogs, we have a Might print the story on him, but that would tip off any other spies or secret agents as to where you boys were traveling, and cause you more trouble than it would be worth."

"Why not have all his credentials photographed," suggested Brockett, "and keep one set of copies here, while sending another set to the se cret service at Washington?"



HE RIMED A WELL-MEANT NICK AT THE YOUNGSTER

"Good idea, boy. Good idea," chuckled the sheriff. "I'll do it. Do

"It iss me. Vot vish you?" acknowledged the baron, amiably. The large, irascible man seized Daron Zollern with a clutch like that photographic duplier is, kept a set himself, and sent still another set to official friends in Chicago. As to the you and then I'll collect your part-ners!" baron: He raved. He called heaven And the genuine sheriff of Little and the infernal regions alike to wit-ness that dire calamities would de-Rock, without further delay or parley, dragged the noble Baron Zollern headscend upon the United States, the state of Arkansas, the city of Little Rock, and the hardy sheriff, unless his papers were returned and all duplicates destroyed. Whereupon the sheriff, ap-parently but little frightened, had the baron photographed while at the height of his oratory, and presented Even in the Arkansas hills - news travels swiftly, and the boys had hardly begun the second installment of their flight when they were halted by the boys with souvenir copies of the a grinning and wholly peaceful negro, bringing tidings from Little Rock, with a request that they return forth-

Late in the evening, somewhat refreshed by the hospitality of the sheriff, the boys resumed their journey. The sheriff himself escorted them to the train, and with him came Pod Morgan, owner of the bloodhounds barfield by the proper tricks for sheriff Morgan, owner of the bloodhounds baf-fied by the pepper trick a few short bours before. Mr. Morgan showed no resentment against the youngsters, and even insisted on sending a young hound to the home address of each -"a dawg," as Mr. Morgan stated brought yo' in, an' dat he'd jest menully kick de debbil outen me if Ah didn't—an' so Ah stirred mahseff right "that'll be a real comfort to yore fambly, an' will be mighty useful when it comes tuh keepin' foreign snakes from traipsin' 'roun' yo' premises." Several of Mr. Morgan's famous blood-hounds were with him and the boys Three hours later the youngsters, stained, muddy and thoroughly tired, were having a friendly pow-wow with earned, with astonishment, that the dreaded man-trackers were rather small, measly-looking creatures, not large enough or powerful enough to make a good fight against a bull-ter-rier, and answering in no description dry interesting papers, was foaming in a strong though crudely constructed the stories or the pictures which pass

current in all literature,
"Real bloodhounds," explained Mr.
Morgan, grinningly, "has come tub be
nothin' but show dawgs, with long
ears that'd git cotched in the brambles in a minnit. Yuh turn a pack of real bloodhounds loose atter a man, an' they'd all sit down on their tails an'

yell right helpless. Real, genuwine, man-cotchin' dawgs is a wuss mixture than Injun an' nigger—but they can foller, an' they can find."
"They don't look," ventured Solano, "as if they would tear a man to pieces when they caught him."

Tell me, whar did you pick up that pepper trick?"
"Cuban scheme," explained Solano

"In the Ten Years' war, my father and his friends threw the Spaniards off the trail a dezen times that war. "Great idee," quoth Mr. Morgan. "I don't bear you boys the least ill-will



fer it-but somebody's got tuh make good fer them dawgs, an' I reckon it'll have tuh be the German."

"Came by mail this afternoon," grounded to a farrier who was play-cried the sheriff as the station receded into distance. "Note to me with it. In the third inning the troopers be-Note said to give it to you as the gan to land on the moving-picture train started. Good-bye, boys, and man and two hits were followed by a good luck go with you!"

There isn't much that can be said about certain stretches along the Rio Grande, except that they are undoubtedly those portions of Texas which edly those portions of Texas which made a great general declare that if he had that state and the infernal regions at his disposal he'd live in hell and rent out Texas. Mesquite and prickly brush; jungles bisected here and there with thorny trails; habitations almost as scattered and as seldom visible as in the days when the Commence and the Linan rode abroad

remarkable to find good games in full blast upon the Rio Grande—games which may not be played with big



league skill, but which are filled with liveliness and pepper, loud outcries and troubles for the umpire.

ries between the Fourth cavalry and the common citizens promised to be the warmest battle seen on the banks of the big river in several moons. While the cavalry had won the first contest 17 to 9 on heavier hitting the common citizens-war correspond ents and camera artists in the main—had been reinforced the night before the second tussle. Two lithe, sinewy youngsters had blown into camp, as-serting that they had some small, unimportant business with the com-mander. As that official had tempo-rary business at San Antonio, the boys had been made welcome and givwhen they caught him."

Mr. Morgan and the sheriff hawhawed long and loud.

"No, son, they don't look that way,
and they ain't," gurgled the delighted
Mr. Morgan. "What's more, there
never was no man-eatin' dawgs used
ter chase nobody, not even niggers,
in the old slavery days when a nigthe common citizens were
short-handed, the new arrivals were

questioned Solano. "They couldn't very well put us in any location will be sheriff. "Their scheme was plain crough. All they wanted was the papers and letters you boys are carrying."

"Elow would they nave nanoued us?"

ger run away, the thing to do was tucatch him, but not tuh kill him. Kill a \$1,000 nigger? Son, that would be plumb idictic, wouldn't it? The hounds was simply used tuh foller him, locate him, an' make a racket till the hunters could come up an' get the park and letters you boys are carrying.

"He sheriff."

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"The sheriff."

"The scheme was plain cate him, an' make a racket till the hunters could come up an' get the plant and declared that they make the plant and declared that they will be son, were modest and diffident when asked to play, and declared that they make the son, were modest and diffident when asked to play, and declared that they make the son, were modest and diffident when asked to play, and declared that they make the son, were modest and diffident when asked to play, and declared that they make the son, were modest and diffident when asked to play, and declared that they make the son, were modest and diffident when asked to play, and declared that they will be son, were modest and diffident when asked to play and the son asked to play asked to guard centerfield will be the son asked to play chough. All they wanted was the papers and letters you boys are carrying.
They'd have took those away from you and then turned you loose, figuring that you were too completely bluffed to make any kick, or to do anything encepting to go straight home. Good ideas, some—but you sure did sting 'em this time."

"Well," arsented Mr. Morgan, "that would be plumb diffrunt. An Injun is a diffrunt beast from a nigger. You nigger was mighty valuable—you had to look out fer his hide. Your Injun was mighty dangerous, an' better det it than livin'. See the diffrunce, sonny!

That's something of a poser," admitted his brows, thoughtfully.

"That's comething of a poser," admitted his brows, thoughtfully.

They do not have took those away from man."

"In Cuba." put in Cchno, "the Span lows off the team. It was explained, however, that Sanborn, the estimable war correspondent of the New York whirl, had counted himself out with a charley-horse, while Summers, kodak man of the Chicago Blizzard, had been sting by a scorpion—not seriously, but squarely on the right wrist, disabling him from further baseball do ings. That left two vacancies, and the appearance of the boys was a blessing to the common citizens' array.

Brockett and Solano warmed up with real delight when the teams were with real delight when the teams were summoned to the field. They had found friends—a jovial crowd of newspaper men and photographic experts—and the minor officers of the regiment had likewise extended them a war' welcome. The Polo Grounds, as he troopers proudly styled the ball yard, was somewhat humpy in places, and rather diversified with cactus in and rather diversified with cactus in others, but everybody concerned had seen far worse arenas for the game. Grandstand there was none, but long lines of cracker-boxes, beer cases and brush heaps afforded sitting room, while hundreds of the enthusiastic bugs stood as close to the base lines as they dared. Mexican ranchers, Mexican peons, rurales on short fur-loughs, "lungers" who had sought that region for their health, and soldiers by the hundred—such was the assembly, and it is doubtful if any ball game

and it is constitut any sait game ever was played before a more uproarious crowd.

A college man who was directing things for a moving-picture concern went in as pitcher for the common citizens, and seemed fairly capable.

He storped the cayalry hitless for He stopped the cavalry hitless for two innings, pop flies and strikeouts quickly disposing of the warriors. The common citizens were equally help-less with the stick. Brockett and So-The travelers were accustomed to receiving notes by now and they were hardly eurprised when Brockett, as the train moved out, received a small pinch on their first times up. Brockett and Solano "Carpe by mail this afternoon."

"The spider! Look out for the tarantula, boy-look out for the spider!"

With a startled yell Solano sprang nimbly backward. The ball fell with a chugging thud and rolled away. Two runs crossed the platter, and the whole regiment gave vent to wild and woolly how is of glee. Solano, a bright crimeon, auffusing his city country.

And there with thorny transitions almost as scattered and as sections almost as scattered and as sections almost as in the days when the Comanche and the Lipan rode abroad in the land—that is the Rio Grande border. It is an ideal country for smugglers, cattle-thieves and revolutionists, just as it was once the happy hunting ground of the most pernicious red men.

After this the tide of battle ebbed and flowed. The common citizens began to hit the distinguished marksman who was pitching, and got back those two runs in the fifth inning. They accumulated two more in the sixth, thanks to a neat drive by Brockett, and Solano got some measured frevenge in the seventh when he are and stepped on thire soul. "Good idea, boy. Good idea," chuckled the sheriff. "I'll do it. Do it right away."

And a few hours later, various highly valued documents, papers that would cause tremendous stirrings in the land of the Black Eagle, were en route to Washington. The sheriff, by way of good measure and variety, presented the boys with a set of the photographic dupiler is, kept a set of the cack of the bat will rouse the choes where once the Indian warthe echoes where once the Indian war-whoop scared the birds. Hence it can hardly be considered startling or even in favor of the common citizens, and the audience rooting like wild men.

The moving-picture man fed the first batsman a high, fast ball, and it whizzed past first for two bases. A strikeout disposed of the next man, while the next drew four balls. The chaplain came up, tried to catch the infield napping with a bunt, and was thrown out at first, leaving men on third and second, with two down.

The bugler caught a slow, tantaliz-

ing curve squarely on the trade-mark, and it soared out over center field. Brockett ran back, back and kept on traveling. At the very edge of a mosquite clump far behind his position he gathered in the ball and heard a tremendous outburst of applause from the assemblage. He arched the ball back into the infield, started to walk back to the bench—and then some-thing swished through the air, and a loop settled round his shoulders. The lasso was pulled in with rapid hands, and Brockett vanished behind the mesquite clump before he could even give a warning cry.

It doesn't take long for a crowd of husky athletes to traverse the distance between the home plate and conterfield. As Brockett disappeared behind the mesquite, half a dozen ball players, with a yell of surprise and rage, dashed across the diamond. It was less than half a minute before himself, still mixed up with the coils of a lariat, his shirt half-torn off, the "It appe of a lariat, his shirt half-form off, the waistband of his trousers ripped, and his pockets incide out. His assailants, whoever they might have been, had vanished into the chaparral, and the ears open—all tell me that no Japcrackling of the underbrush gave evidence that they were rapidly widening the distance between themselves

and the avenging cavalry.
"What was it?" "Who roped you?" "Are you hurt?" the players chorused, as they picked up the rumpled but uninjured centerfielder. Brockett, freed from the tangling rope, shook himself, made an effort to readjust his torn clothing, and then sat down on

0

think somebody's feelings will be in

"Your belt is gone!" cried Solano.
"Yes. That's the best part of it,"
gurgled Brockett. "Half an hour before the game, not wishing to be too
heavily weighted, I took my money,
my packets of letters—everything of
any value or any weight—and placed
them in the safe at headquarters. The
captain of Company F fixed it all up
for me. That took two or three

for me. That took two or three pounds and a lot of bulk off my waist, and gave me a chance to work more freely. Whoever lassoed me wanted that belt. They jerked me in among these bushes, flung me on my face, and went through me in less than five seconds' time. And they got the belt, they got the belt, and ran away with it!" Brockett again collapsed with

"Didn't you see them at all, my boy?" questioned the chaplain.

veteen jacket. His arm caught on some thorns, sir, and here's a bit of veteen jacket.



AIR, AND SETTLED ROUND HIS SHOULDERS

tle man-at least, his feet were very small—and he wore regular city shoes. That's all the trail tells, sir. I suppose they had horses the other side of this brush, and are a long ways from here by now."

Six troopers rode out, beating the chaparral, but with little hope of overtaking the lasso-throwers. umphant common citizens and the defeated cavalry returned to camp, ex-changing much persiflage, and map-ping out the preliminaries for the and Solano, assigned to a comfortable tent, started a debate as to the identity of their latest adversary.

"The fact that he was a small man,

leaving a small track," said Solano, "seems to indicate that our Japanese friend swam out of the North river.

Doesn't it look that way?"
"It surely does," assented Brockett. "Still, the German baron may have a few small men as his confederates.
That would be possible, wouldn't it?"
"The baron is still locked up at
Little Rock," objected Solano. "He
would have considerable difficulty in they reached the point where the lassoed youngster had last been visible, but all that they found was Brockett anyone in this but the gentle Jap.

"It appears to be some of his playgentlemen have been seen in Solano smiled, significantly. "That

may be-but did it ever occur to you that the average Chinaman looks very much like the average Japanese? And there are quite a few Chinamen along the river, so I'm told."

The boys looked out of the tent and the grass, rocking with laughter.

"I'm not hurt," he explained, because of merriment, "but I invitation to the eating-place of the line invitation to the line invitation t

clad, miserable of appearance,

ciad, miserable of appearance, intercepted them,
"I beg pardon, senores."
"Tell it in Spanish, if you can't in
English," said Solano, amiably. The
Mexican at once started a brief, but energetic oration in the Castilian tongue, and wound it up by pressing a solled piece of cardboard into Solano's hand.

lano's hand.

"He says," interpreted Solano,
"that he was a poor peon, very much
in debt; that he had saved a little
money, and took a gambling chance today by staking it on the ball game. day by staking it on the ball game. Says he got five to one for his money. He says that the catch you made saved him; that he can now not only pay off his debt, but that he will be quite a rich man, for Mexico. Just to express his gratitude he also says that his brother, Juan Torrejon, is a very fioted bad man on the Mexican side of the river, and that if we should ever encounter Mr. Torrejon the card he has just handed me will recommend us quite highly to his good graces. Very civilized of the gentleman, isn't it?"

"You can never tell. That card may be more than useful yet. Let's hurry along to supper."

CHAPTER XXVI

Colonel Lewis, under whose command both the Fourth and Sixth cavalry were temporarily guarding the

border, was a soldier of the old school white of mustache and hair, erect and stately despite his sixty years and more, and possessed of but one great grievance in life—that wars did not happen often enough to really keep him busy. As a boy he had blown a, bugle when the very regiments he now commanded swept into the fight at the hattles of the Shevandogh Valat the battles of the Shenandoah Valley. The war over, he had been sent to West Point to put the finishing "No, sir," Prockett replied. "They jerked me in here so fast I had no chance to turn, and then laid me face downward, so that I couldn't see them. They didn't even speak, but robbed me and were gone before I could even roll over and look after them. It was finely done—just the way the wild west melodramas used to have the Mexican villain lasso the heroic cowboy."

To West Point to put the finishing polish upon an education acquired in actual campaigning. Graduating in 1869, he had fought Sioux, Cheyennes, Comanches and Apaches; he battled in twenty states, and received five wounds in action. In 1898 he served conspicuously at San Juan Hill; then, transferred to the Philippines, he won honors and promotions in Luzon and Samar. The old gentleman was now commanding two whole regiments and two batteries of light artillery—the largest force ever assembled under his boy."
"Didn't they get anything besides the belt?" asked Solano.
"Yes, they did." And again Brockett was convulsed. "They got a nice set of nonsensical messages and faked ciphers that I put in four hours constructing on the train. I hope they

good luck go with you!"

And the note bore, in the same mysterious code, simply these directions:

"2BH Fin W WWP Pos PO TC E

2BH PB PO TO TC BA TC Fin TO

SB TC W TO W TC Fin AB PO SH."

"Hurry along and look out for trouble," Brockett translated. "Td risk something that there's plenty of that article still ahead of us."

CHAPTER XXIV.

"umble on the part of a contractors' agent, who was covering second. With the belt?" asked Solano.

"Yes, they did." And again Brockett was convulsed. "They got a nice of nonsensical messages and faked ciphers that I put in four hours constructing on the train. I hope they get rich with their plunder."

An old trooper, a veteran of the plains, had pushed a short distance out on his last previous appearance.

CHAPTER XXIV.

There isn't much that can be said about that can be said along the Rio

Solano settled with eager hands for the catch. Just as the ball landed in the part of a contractors' agent, who was covering second. With the was convulsed. "They got a nice of nonsensical messages and faked ciphers that I put in four hours constructing on the train. I hope they get rich with their plunder."

An old trooper, a veteran of the plains, had pushed a short distance into the chaparral while this conversation was going on.

"There was three of 'em, sir," he got a nice of nonsensical messages and faked ciphers that I put in four hours constructing on the train. I hope they get rich with their plunder."

An old trooper, a veteran of the plains, had pushed a short distance into the chaparral while this conversation was going on.

"There was three of 'em, sir," he growled to his young aides, "there was a Roman once—I forget his name, but I read about him at the Point—who took part in one thousand battles, and personally killed one thousand battles, and personally ki ton his last previous appearance. He barely grazed the ball and raised a tiny fly that hovered over third.

Solano settled with eager hands for the catch. Just as the ball landed in his glove, the trooper who was coaching at third bellowed, like a foghorn:

The ended of the captain of Company C. The chief at the other a vaquero, with new, high have to sit around doing nothing or the other a vaquero, with new, high have to sit around doing nothing or watching a yellow old river for fear somebody might declare himself in on various the other avaquero, with new high have to sit around doing nothing or watching a yellow old river for fear somebody might declare himself in on various transmitted one thousand barbarrance.

"The revisus appearance.

"The was three of 'em, sir," he out of his life. In his time, there was fighting to be done, real fighting, coming to you all the time, and you didn't have to sit around doing nothing or watching a yellow old river for fear somebody might declare himself in on the content of the captain of company. some graft that the other fellow had barely overlooked. Those were the

somewhat augmented by memories of the times when he had fought three battles with the Lipan Indians not

battles with the Lipan Indians not fifty miles from his present location. "There's one thing," he grumbled, "that I deeply regret about those fights with the Lipans. I killed too many of 'em, and scared the rest away. If I had gone a little slow about it, and not played hog, they might have lasted till the present time, and I might go right out this morning and chase them over the river. Well, Conroy, what do you want?" what do you want?"

The old trooper saluted. "Couple of young fellows to see you, colonel. They've been here two days waiting for you, sir. Blamed good ball play-ers, too, both of 'em."

"What the blazes do I care about their ball playing? Tell 'em to come in, and show their excuse for living!" Brockett and Solano, two handson

athletic youngsters, somewhat frayed as to dress, saluted the old warhorse, with becoming gravity. Brockett drew from his clothing a flat package, and handed it to the colonel, who received with a quizzical smile. "Never mind any explanations," said the old soldier. "I have been

given a little advance explanations concerning you. You are the secret service messengers who were to bring me certain orders and instruc-tions in a cipher that no foreign spy could translate without the aid of a chisel. If you got through and brought me the papers safely, I was to learn the confounded cipher, and adopt it for future correspondence you didn't get through I was to re-port the fact with deep regrets: Correct, isn't it?' "Yes, colonel."

"Have much trouble getting here?" "A trifle, colonel."

The old fellow chuckled. "A trifle, eh? I'll bet it was more than a trifle. Good game boys, both of you. This package contains orders that may mean a lot to our general foreign policy, and at least two governments that I could mention would give a good deal to get the key. Tell me about your trip, and the key. Tell me about your trip, and what they tried to do to you."

The boys, thus encouraged, told the veteran the full details of their journeys, while the old man alternately Aughed and stormed. When the re-cital was finished, Colonel Lewis shook hands with them heartily, and "the youngsters knew that the grim old hero was their friend for life.

"Til have to devote my attention to this cipher code of yours for the next two hours," said the colonel. "You boys will mess with me today. I be-

(To be continued)

"NEAL OF THE NAVY" IS THE BEST SERIAL YET MADE. IF WE gazed upon the dreary panorama of brush, rock, sand and turbid river. BET YOUR LAST DOLLAR IT IS. SEE IT NEXT MONDAY, HAPPY