Farmer's Gun

April, 1912.

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just like you've offered-lots of writ-

ing. I like writing." From the vivacity with which he expressed this liking, Browning deduced that he would rather write than fish which was indeed a saving grace.

"What do you think of him?" Clooney asked Browning at lunch.

"He's the biggest, loveliest, mest ungainly rube that ever sat down at a desk but, believe me, he has the most exquisite pair of hands I ever looked at. Why, man, he's an artist! If such an expression as muscular elasticity deeribes those mittens he has the ideal base-ball fist and no mistake. If he can twirl a ball with the ease and control with which he plys his pen, he's all you elaimed for him, Clooney.'

Will he play?" was Clooney's natural inquiry.

"Not for a few days, Clooney. He's going to do it voluntarily if he does it at all. It's up to us to lead him gently to it. He's coming out to see the practice to-night."

But the practice passed without any such honor attending. Reuben Wiss went back to his desk at seven o'clock and Browning found him there at nine. Don't let that work interfere too

much with your amusement," admonished Browning. "We expected to see you out at the park to-night." Wiss smiled broadly. "I was outside the fence," he confessed.

"How do the sports show up?"

"Slow bunch—except Clooney Wiss could not be sourly critical. He stated unpleasant facts smiling. big, round face was unmarred by the lines of petty passions; it beamed good nature all the time. Browning tried to repress a smile while Wiss laughed heartily at his own crude delineation. His language was limited to short phrases. What he could not express by choice of vocabulary was accompanied by such facial illustrations as would show that he meant to be pleasant however his sentences might be construedand what he left unsaid was full of elo-

you think we've got a rum team?" hinted Browning after a pause. "Yes," agreed Wiss, and broke again

into laughter at his candor.
"I think you're right. We're losing ground every game. You probably know that we headed the league for four years and it's hitting our self-re-

spect hard to get down so low."
"Best team'll win," prophesied Wiss.
"Then we've got to have the best team. I want a good pitcher and two outfielders.

"You don't need fielders with a good

pitcher." Will you pitch for us?" If the question was staggering in its suddenness

the anwer was mortal. "No!" said Wiss, and laughed with boyish heartiness.

Browning was too serious to be affected by this humorous outburst. For the first time Wiss' laughed nettled him. He spoke hastily: "Then I'll make Walker pitch a winning game or disband the team." It hurt Will to see him get up abruptly and leave the of-

Wiss did not leave until ten o'clock, and at that hour the "Imperial Limited" was due. He stepped down to the platform for a few minutes. The display of pastry in the restaurant proved irresistable, and he entered to have a piece of pie. There were two others then taking lunch at the end of the counter and Wiss crowded down beside them to make room for the rush of passengers. One of them he at once recognized at once as "Wistaria" Walker, whom he had guessed was the Sudsbury regular pitcher when he glimpsed at the practice game a few hours before.

The man who was with him was much older and Wiss saw him pass a ten dollar note to Walker, saying at the same time, "Remember, you don't know me when we meet again." He shook Wal-

ker's hand and withdrew hastily. The incident started a hive of suspicions working in Wiss' ingenious brain. The next four days were full of the coming struggle between Sudsbury, the tail-enders, and Kipawa, the leaders. and Wiss was perhaps more anxious to see that game than he was to go fish-

Browning and Clooney were in con-

ference at the grounds that eventful Saturday. Walker was trying his arm and pitching wonderfully. Batter after batter swung at the elusive sphere until Clooney could no longer maintain a glum countenance. He went to the bat cheerily and felt the wind of the ball for three wild swings and went back to

Browning grinning.

"He's comin' back!" he announced in a loud whisper. "What dope have you

been slingin' him?"

"Nothing has happened so far as I know," avowed Browning. "He's probably heard of the Onaping twirler and feels that he's being noticed. I've decided not to pamper Wiss though. If he wants to be stubborn about it we will not coax him into the game. He's a first-class man in the office and I'm glad you recommended him, but he'll not play ball and that settles that. Walker can put over a great game when he's fit-remember how he held down

the Mattawa's the last time we played them? Look at him new! If he treats

them? Look at him new! If he treats the Kipawa's that way we'll march uphill shouting. Hello! Here comes Wiss."

The crowd was pouring into the grounds and with them came Reuben Wiss. He did not stop at the grand stand, however, but took a bee line to where Browning and Cleeney stood. At the same time the players came in off the field and grouped close by. Browning introduced Wiss to the players in turn. Walker shook his hand limply and averted his eyes. He glanced slyly and averted his eyes. He glanced slyly across to where the Kipawas were grouped and there Wiss looked lso. He saw the man who had given Walker the

money. He looked at Walker inquiringly, but Walker avoided his glance. Wiss knew enough about the baseball field to guess that the man who had given Walker the money was the manager of the Kipawa team, just as he had suspected! He

pretended to be sizing up the Kipa crowd, but said nothing.

Walker felt that he must spea "Guess we'll have to go some to that outfit!" he remarked.

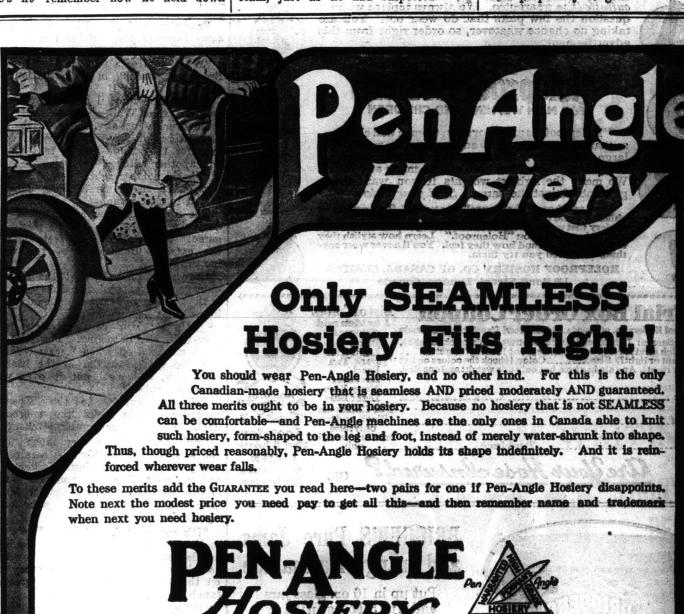
Wiss smiled. "Don't give them a h for five innings and they're yours," !

"Who can do that?" sneered Walker. 'Walker, of the Sudsburys," declared

"You've another guess," said Walker tartly. "You haven't seen those fellows at the bat."

"I've seen their manager." Their eyes met and straightway those of Wal-

"What's that to do with it?" he mum bled and slouched into the dressing room. Wiss had not changed a facial muscle—the same rotundity of cheek; the same clarity of eye — withat the same propensity to grin.



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