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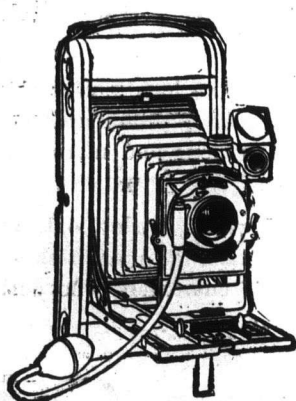
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I felt myself reel backward. Then came a blessed relief. It was Carleton Dudley's voice.

"I see it, Dick," he said. "It's under the table—they must have knocked it off in the scrimmage."

I looked and saw it. Stooping down, I took it in my hand. It seemed wonderfully light. Quickly I thrust my fingers into the tobacco. There was nothing there. The jewels had gone!

"Good Heavens, Dudley," I cried, "they are not here! He must have secured them while he held the secre-

tary there down on the table!"

He turned and sprang to Herr Schmalz's side, shaking him roughly and roaring out his name. The preventer of crime awoke with a start.

"Vell!" he queried crustily. "Vas iss?"

"The man you warned us of has come," cried Dudley, "and he has got the diamonds!"

Herr Schmalz gave a self-satisfied grunt, and leaned back comfortably.

"Vell," he said, "didn't I tell you so?"

Clooney's Rube.

By Charles Dorian.

THE District League was made up of four teams and Sudbury tailed the list with one game won, five lost, and ten games to play.

For Sudbury this showing bordered on the calamitous—Sudbury, the stars of the league for the four glorious years of its being.

"We're jinked!" spluttered shortstop Clooney to the youthful manager.

"We're no such thing," declared Browning, the man addressed. "You know the cause, Clooney—you're literally next to it in fact."

"Me eyes are always on the batter, Bobby, boy. If me thoughtful gaze rested on the gutta percha with its present adornment you'd get the habit of associatin' me name with hallucinations—and sure we're no relations at all!"

"Well, then," Browning took up, "what do you suggest?" Browning knew that Clooney knew all the time that victory was a doubtful notion with "Wistaria" Walker in the box.

"I'd say something awful' foolish if I'd suggest anything. Just get a south-paw with one arm and make him pitch with his toes."

"We're as good as a circus now," said Browning resentfully. "I'd like to get a pitcher I'd have to dare win a game for us—I'm tired sugar-plumming Walker."

"Could you get a Rube a job?" asked Clooney, with apparent irrelevancy.

"If the rube can throw anything but a lemon over the door-mat without breaking a veranda post—well, we'll make a job of him."

"I know a Rube!" nodded Clooney.

"How long have you known him?"

"All his life, it seems."

"And the Suds, drowning in defeat for two months—what an untimely jest!"

"But he may not like our manners," Clooney hinted.

"And he may not know how to play ball. We'll develop a new set of tastes for him if he can twirl a sphere so it won't look like a whole cheese on the walk."

"He has never been known to let leather touch wood," declared Clooney without any show of enthusiasm. They were seated in the Superintendent's office of the Temiskaming road, and Clooney lolled lazily in his chair while Browning at his desk showed no better dignity. It was after hours—also after the fifth defeat.

"You're telling me of a prodigy as if we'd been raising a nursery full of 'em. Where does he live?"

"Seventeen miles from the flag station, Onaping, forty miles west of here."

"Can we get him out?"

"He was out—four years ago—came down to see the city and went back after a week's visit, bored to the boots. Met him at a ball game down there. Said he learned to pitch a ball himself until he wore a hole in the side of the barn—it was a ball he whittled out of an oak knot, he said. Looked at the professional twirlers as if they'd got their lessons from him. When the game was over he took me down to the field and introduced me to Frank Wiss, his brother, who pitched a no-hit game for the pennant winners."

"That was four years ago?" The inquiry was suspiciously quizzical.

"Four years ago. And he gave a demonstration that afternoon which made me mighty glad to know him. I thought the Suds. would like a real sensation and I invited him up. He wouldn't take it at all. I even offered to get a knot for him out of our only and historic acorn tree in the park. He simply doesn't like the game. Could land a big league contract any day—but just won't go in for the game."

"Clooney, you're fired! You have deceived me! Why did you mention this man to me?"

"I got a letter from him to-day and he says he'd like to get a job in town. Can you get Rube Wiss a job? We won't say a word about our troubles till Rube Wiss has a job—get it?"

"Clooney, you're no match for this innocent young person; leave him to me."

Next morning the mail carried a letter to Mr. Reuben Wiss which was brief and business-like. It read:

"Your letter to Mr. Clooney has been referred to us. Use the enclosed pass, Onaping to Sudbury, and report at this office not later than Monday morning, bringing this letter with you."

"O. Browning, Chief Clerk."

Browning arrived at the office earlier than usual on Monday morning and found "Rube" Wiss waiting for him. Browning exhausted all the preliminary courtesies over the prodigy who stood awkwardly at ease, pulling at his soft felt hat and grinning all over his tawny face.

"How do you like the look of the town?" asked Browning.

The compass of "Rube's" grin narrowed until his face was studious, his pale blue eyes thoughtful.

"Healthy place, I guess," he ventured.

"None healthier," said Browning.

"Purest drinking water on the pike; climate always fair; good opportunities for education and amusement—an all-around, rattling good town—and has the best baseball diamond outside the cities."

Browning's eyes passed critically up and down "Rube's" face as he uttered this last sentence, only to find it lacking the slightest interest.

"Nice game, baseball," was all he said in approbation.

"Best game known," supplemented Browning. "You play, of course?"

"Sometimes—rather good fishin' though."

Oh annihilation! What votary of anything faster than marbles ever survived the expression of such a choice? Browning wilted into his chair and sought solace in the miscellany of various forms in the bottom drawer of his desk. Heaving an imprudent sigh, he placed an application form in front of Wiss and commanded him to draw up his chair and fill it in.

If Reuben Wiss was as good with the bamboo as with the quill, he was "certainly some angler," to quote Browning.

"You've had no experience at office work, but that penmanship would get you a job anywhere that writing has to be done. I will give you a job in the office here at which you will have a great deal of it. When you get familiar with the clerical requirements we'll draft you into something better. Or if you would prefer outside work, yard-man or—"

"No, sir," cut in Wiss. "I want a job



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