BRITAIN'S NEW GOVERNMENT.

The most pronounced fact respecting the composition of the Liberal government is that it is "maistly Scotch." Whether that fact will commend it to the people of the sister kingdoms and call forth an additional display of the large spirit of tolerance which is one of the most pronounced political characteristics of the population south of the Tweed has yet to be determined.

Another prominent fact is the recognition which has been bestowed upon the radical elements of the Liberal party in the formation of the ministry of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. The population of Great Britain, in spots, is becoming quite advanced in its political opinions, and it is quite right and proper that the thinkers who lead their fellows should be given representation in the government.

The conservative elements have had their innings. It has been a somewhat longer spell than usual. The latter portion of the term was productive of some measures that were more reactionary than progressive. It is now high time that the hands of the timepiece of progress were moved forward a trifle. An administration has been formed which will act in harmony with the evident sentiments of the people generally.

Whether the life of the government shall be long or short must depend upon the degree of strength its members display when their talents are put to a real test as well as upon the capacity for leadership exhibited by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. In all frankness it must be admitted that the Liberal leader's career thus far has not been impressive. He appears to lack the qualities which in Mr. Balfour throw so many serious defects completely into the background. However, Sir Henry is about to be given a real chance to demonstrate the quality of his mettle.

There is a tradition in connection with British politics that the Liberals are strong in domestic affairs and the Conservatives most to be relied upon in cases of foreign crises. At the present time the political situation at home is very far from satisfactory. The Nonconformists of England have been roused to the greatest activity and hostility by the school legislation of the late government, which they regarded as putting altogether too much power into the hands of the Established Church.

Every section of Great Britain and Ireland has been stirred to its depths by the fiscal reforms proposed by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, a policy the late Premier is suspected of sympathizing with very deeply.

The Home Rulers of Ireland claim that they drove the last nail in the coffin of the Balfour government, and that no government of the future can exist unleses it consents to view with favor the proposition to grant Ireland legislative independence—a very indefinite term and fraught with deep significance for the future of the British Empire considering the apparent temper of the Irish leaders.

It is, therefore, apparent that if the Liberals have hitherto proved themselves the more adroit and the more effective managers of domestic affairs, the government of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman must needs possess all the talents to meet the situation demanding its attention. Admittedly there is much strong material in the cabinet. The names of nearly all the members of the government are familiar to those who take an interest in the affairs of the Mother Country. John Burns, with all his pronounced radicalism, is one of the coolest headed and most reasonable men in the country. Lloyd-George is a somewhat ebullient reformer, noted in the past for the violence with which he laid down his "political propositions." There are other advanced political thinkers in the administration, but they will probably be found very effectively held in check by the careful, conservative element, which effectively dominates the government.

Withal it is doubtful whether the ability and experience and caution of Sir Edward Grey, John Morley, James Bryce, H. H. Asquith, H. J. Gladstone, coupled with the shrewd, calculating diplomacy of Lord Aberdeen, will be sufficient to insure a prolonged life for the government. There are weaknesses in its composition which are apt to create a doubt whether it will secure an effective working majority on an appeal to the country. A government to carry on in Great Britain and to administer affairs with an eye single to the true welfare of the country should be independent of all political wings and factions. This the Campbell-Bannerman administration can hardly hope to be.

STILL HARPING ON RECIPROCITY

President Roosevelt in his message to Congress said something ought to be done to bring about more intimate trade relations between the United States and the other countries of the American continent. The president made no specific reference. He probably meant exactly what he said, and considered the trade of other American republics and dependencies of quite as much value to the Americans as that of Canada. But we observe that most of the American public men who take up the subject pay more attention to the case of Canada than to that of any of the southern republics. The manufacturers of the United States at a meeting held in Chicago have called the attention of Congress to the remarkable development of our industries, and have suggested that something be done to counteract the tendencies of the times. It is asserted that fifty million dollars' worth of manufacturing establishments have been lost to the United States within the past few years because of the superior attractions of the markets on this side of the line and the superior advantages our manufacturers enjoy. The situation, it is pointed out, calls for the passage of reciprocity measures. And Congress is urged to take action of some kind. Unfortunately for the position of American manufacturers, the conditions are eminently satisfactory to Canadians. And as Canadians must be a party to any contract involving a modification of the conditions in order that their neighbors may profit by the change, we submit that any radical departure from the programme that is working so satisfactorily from our point of view must necessarily be preceded by extended "pour parlers." It is extraordinary how very indifferent we can be now to the various movements our neighbors originate for the purpose of securing reciprocity of trade in certain lines—lines, we also note, in which they are obviously the losers by the Canadian policy and in which they hope to be the gainers if they can only bring about a change in this policy. There was a time when the conditions were just the reverse of what they are now. But the matter is scarcely worth notice. Congress acts slowly in such matters. And Canada is indifferent, whether Congress acts at all or not. Canadian agricultural interests admit that reciprocity with the United States—that is, a full measure of reciprocity, not a lop-sided arrangement designed principally for the benefit of particular American interests—would be a fairly good thing for them. They would welcome a fair measure of the right kind; but the agricultural interests recognize that it is next to impossible to secure an arrangement that would be of benefit to them without granting concessions that would be all but fatal to other industries. Hence they do not press their case.

The situation in Russia is not improving. Anarchy is running riot in all the provinces now. The spirit of revolt has seized upon the armies in the Far East, so that the revolutionary circle is complete. What the Czar is doing to convince his people of the genuine character of the reforms he proposes to grant is not apparent. In fact, the presence of the Czar in the country, not to speak of the situation, is not apparent. A few months ago he was an absolute ruler. Now that he has for the first time been confronted with a situation demanding the qualities of a statesman and a ruler—some of the qualities his ancestors could exercise when called upon, although perhaps qualities which would scarcely be tolerated in this generation—the Czar of all the Russias shuts himself up and transfers all responsibility to his Prime Minister, recently selected.

* * *

The special correspondent of the London Times in Vienna writes that the rapidity with which the Czar's concession of a constitution reacted upon the Socialist workmen of Vienna has strengthened the feeling that Austria may soon have to reckon with a democratic upheaval analogous to that which is convulsing the Russian Empire. It is quite evident, he says, that the many thousand workmen who crowded the Ringstrasse to celebrate the Russian revolution and make a demand for universal suffrage in Austria, would not have turned out at a moment's notice unless they had been higly organized and thoroughly under control. The Socialist spokesmen demanded that the Emperor of Austria should grant to his subjects the universal suffrage of which the King of Hungary is supposed to approve, and this utterance was received with an enthusiasm which showed how grateful it was to the mob. Promises of renewed demonstrations and veiled threats of a general strike were also eagerly welcomed and unanimously approved. The signs, he adds, are abundant that unless the governmnt hastens to prepare a large measure of suffrage reform, Vienna will soon be the seene of a serious popular movement. Hungary, he thinks, is less accessible to outside influence, but there, too, the significance of the popular demand for universal suffrage is unmistakable.

* * *

Prof. Edgar L. Larkin, writing in the Scientific American, and referring to the attractions of a great body which is invisible to finite eyes by the means of finite instruments, says that the universe has a finite character of such length that light moving with a known velocity of 186,000 miles per second to traverse it. But it matters little whether the edifice of stars is larger or smaller than this, the astounding fact is here—the star is moving with this frightful speed. And this motion has a mightly cause equal to the occasion. The quantity of matter capable of exerting this intensity of attraction is so far beyond the powers of mind, that there is no use beginning to think about it. Only one hundred million suns appear on the photographs of the entire celestial vault. Therefore, the visible universe is so utterly insignificant in comparison with the invisible that mathematicians are overwhelmed.

Tainted Gold.

BY MRS. C. N. WILLIAMSON.

Author of "The Barn Stormers," "Fortune's Sport," "Lady Mary of the Dark House," "Queen Sweetheart," "The House by the Lock," etc.

CHAPTER XXV.—(Continued.)

This offer had its humorous side, since the money she was pressing upon him was in reality all his; but Newcome received it with a perfectly grave face. He was on the point of telling her that he needed nothing and would take nothing, when suddenly he had an idea which struck him as brilliant.

"That's awfully good of you," he said, "and I will borrow a sovereign—I really don't want more—on one condition, and one only."

"What is that?" asked Winifred.

"Well, you see, we've been partners, and nothing I hope can ever make us feel like strangers to each other again. And so I can take this money freely from you, if you'll promise me that, in case you should be a little down on your luck at any time, and I was flush, you'd let me lend you something—something really worth while—just supposing, you know, that I could well afford it."

Such a contingency seemed at present rather remote, and so for the pleasure of lending him a pound to-day Winifred pledged herself to his condition for other days to come.

That evening she let him see her off at the station, and he stayed in Brighton for the night (instead of going straight to town to begin work with his sparring partner in preparation for the coming contest), solely for the joy of receiving a letter which Winifred had promised to write.

Next morning the letter came. She had written it before going to bed, in the flat which had once been such a dear home to her and the little mother. Mrs. Gray's relapse had been caused by some bad news about her son, so the girl wrote, though she did not tell what the nature of the news had been; but the nurses hoped for the best, and Winifred thought that the sight of her might do her mother good. She was not alone at the flat, she went on to say; her brother Dick was with her, having come to town only a few days before. And, thanks to Winifred's new riches, they should get on comfortably for a while till "something turned up." Of course, as they had had such sharp reverses of fortune, the flat was now much too expensive for them; but they had it on their hands till it could be sub-let, and so they might better live in it than go elsewhere. If Mr. Newcome came to town while Dick was with her she hoped that he would call upon his late "partner" and her brother.

Hope Newcome thought this the most delightful letter that had ever been written or received; and it went into the pocket nearest his heart, where lay certain documents of a very different character — documents which had brought him to England.

Then he wrote to Winifred, telling her that suddenly-arranged business was calling him to London, and that he should be only too happy to call upon her if she would let him. When this letter had been sent off he went to see Macaire at the Metropole, to say that he was ready for work; but Macaire was engaged, and he was kept waiting.

As a matter of fact, the millionaire was at that moment closeted with a detective in his employ. The man had received a telegram from a colleague in London, with the information that Miss Gray had returned to her flat near Bryanston square, where she had joined her brother quite openly, and had gone with him to the nursing home in Welbeck street, where the mother lay ill, to inquire after the invalid's health.

Where she had been hiding meanwhile had not yet transpired, and Macaire had some sarcastic comments to make upon his employee's methods.

When he had sent the detective away he saw Newcome, and told him that he had found out where the girl was living, and that he was ready to begin work when he liked.

All this seemed very good-natured and unaffected; for Newcome's clothing, although not as conspicuous as that in which he had called upon George Anderson at the Duke of Clarence's, was shabby at best; and handsome and well set up as the wearer was, many men in Macaire's position might not have cared to have him for a travelling companion.

Macaire had his own special car, made after an American model, and it was to accompany him in this gorgeous conveyance that Newcome found himself invited. The millionaire was taciturn at first, appearing to be absorbed in singularly engrossing thoughts, the gruesome, glazed skin on his forehead twitching nervously from time to time; but after a while his mood completely changed. He talked rapidly, and even picturesquely, about sporting matters in general, and boxing in particular, seeming vastly keen upon the subject. He described Joe Nash, otherwise Joey the Kid, advising and warning Newcome of the best way to "tackle" so wary and formidable a customer; and then he drifted into talk of the Stock Exchange, growing almost confidential at last, describing some of his own early successes, and illustrating the maxim that "money makes money." He had had but a moderate fortune to start with, he said, scarcely thirty thousand pounds; but he had been ambitious, and he had had ideas. At the age of twenty-eight or thirty he had made up his mind exactly as to what he wanted in life, and determined to get it. He had speculated, and been phenomenally lucky, and the result had been—well, he would not say how much, but all the money he was ever likely to want. Then he deigned to describe one or two of his first great coups, and Newcome listened with attention.

Only a short time ago he had not been conscious of high worldly ambitions. He had always been poor, had even known great hardships since reaching manhood, and he had expected to remain poor. If he could accomplish the one task to which a beloved woman had solemnly dedicated his life he had thought that he would be satisfied. Afterwards it would not matter so much what happened to him, though no doubt he would rub on somehow well enough when he went back to the States, where he was known and could get something decent to do.

But now all was suddenly changed. He was in love, and he wanted Winifred Gray more than he had dreamt it was possible for a man to want anything. Ambition awoke with the prospect of the strange adventure in which he was engaging. Talk of money interested him. His heart quickened at the story told by Macaire, and though his face betrayed nothing, seeming even indifferent as he listened without any particular expression to the tale of how a man, beginning at an age not much greater than his own, had grasped fortune, he missed not one detail of a single anecdote. Macaire, though he fancied himself a student of character, would have been surprised could he have seen into Hope Newcome's mind.

When the millionaire was tired of telling of his successes and how they had been made, he turned the conversation to the duties of rich men. He did not pose as a dispenser of charity, he remarked. That sort of thing he left to the fellows who wanted to get on the soft side of Princesses and work for titles. As for him, he thought knighthoods positively vulgar, they smelt of soap, beer, or groceries, baronetcies weren't much better, unless a chap was born to them.

"I shouldn't sleep of nights if I didn't feel I was doing some good in the world," he exclaimed, with the well-executed air of frankness which those who knew him intimately recognized at once as leading up to something—something for which they had better keep their eyes open. "But I don't go in for charity in a lump—the kind that's meant to get into the papers; presents of Christmas turkeys to fifty thousand poor people, or endowing hospitals, or giving gold plate to cathedrals. I like to help individuals, not the regular 'slummers,' though it's well enough to look after them, too, but people who have had hard luck, and want just a 'hand-up' out of the slough. Now, for one instance of what I mean, among many, there's a family called Gray; a nice little woman, whom everyone likes who knows her, and a daughter who's on the stage. By the way, she was to have played here in Brighton, I think, the other day, but there was a misunderstanding of some sort—I don't know what. I suppose that's what put her and her mother in my mind at this moment. Anyhow, the family has had hard luck lately, I hear, and I'd like to do something for them—through the brother, perhaps—if I could manage it without its being known. I hate that sort of thing to be talked about. I hate to have people's thanks. Hanged if I know what to say to them, or where to look."

Hope Newcome's heart warmed to the eccentric and hideous millionaire. He had accepted his queer offer because it suited him, but he had not liked the man. Now it occurred to him that, like the toad which is supposed to hide the jewel of price in his ugly head, Lionel Macaire was better inside than out. He was certainly not snobbish; that was proved by his treatment of a shabby young stranger, even though the stranger served his purpose; and now it seemed that he had a good heart.

Newcome had had experiences in his twenty-six years which had made him reticent, slow to form opinions of people, and still slower to utter them. This habit of reserve clung to him now; he was not sure of Macaire, but he was inclined to believe him genuine, and his faint suspicions of the man were not increased by his mention of the Grays. On the contrary, his pulses leaped at the sound of the name, and he was ready to encourage further confidences on the subject without betraying any special eagerness in drawing them out.

If Macaire, remembering Newcome's championship of Winifred Gray outside the stage-door of the Duke of Clarence's, watched his face for signs of emotion, he must have been disappointed. The young man looked civilly interested, just as he had looked before.

"You must remember Miss Gray," Macaire went on. "You hauled a man off the driver's seat of her cab the night I saw you. Perhaps you knew her before?"

"No," said Newcome, calmly. "I'd never seen her till that night. The affair you speak of happened quite by accident."

"You didn't run across her at Brighton, then?"

"I wish I had," Newcome answered, with such apparent frankness that no one could have suspected evasion. "I'd have gone to see her act if she'd been playing in 'Mazeppa.'"

"So would I. But as a well-wisher of the family—I can't say a friend, as I hardly know the Grays personally—I can't help thinking it's just as well she didn't—whatever was the reason that caused her to back out apparently at the last minute. One never knows the rights of these theatrical quarrels. 'Mazeppa,' as it was to have been played, judging from the posters, wasn't a piece I should have cared for a daughter or sister of mine to appear in."

"No," said Newcome, calmly. But there was a spark in his eye at the thought of those posters.

"A man was telling me a day or two ago that the family are in financial straits," continued Macaire. "The mother's ill, and there's a ne'er-do-well young brother who failed in Ireland with a paper he'd taken shares in." (Macaire had not needed his detective to tell him this; he had had a hand in that little transaction himself, having been a power behind the editorial throne which had toppled.) "I don't want to appear in the transaction at all; but if you come out ahead in this fight with the Kid, and make your bow in society as a young man of fashion, you might be able to help me do the trick and others of the same sort. Between us we might get young Gray a berth that would prop up the family fortunes, eh?"

"If I can help, you may count on me for all I'm worth," responded Newcome, this time not attempting to cool down the growing warmth in his breast. He liked Lionel Macaire; and now no warning thrill bade him look before he leaped—to conclusions.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Lion's Den.

Lionel Macaire was giving a dinner to a few friends at his huge palace of a house in Park lane.

Only a dozen men were asked, and there were no women save those engaged to sing and dance strange new dances in diaphanous rainbow draperies while the guests sat over their wine and cigars. But the principal guest was a Royal personage, and a rumor had gone round among those present that after dinner was over the millionaire had a surprise up his sleeve for his friends.

He was celebrated for his surprises of one kind or another. Sometimes they were of a kind to be mentioned afterwards only in whispers by those let into the secret; but they were always notable, not to be forgotten. And perhaps there was not another man in England who entertained with such eccentric magnificence as Lionel Macaire. It was because of this—and because, too, of a certain room in his town house, or under it—that he had got his nickname of Nero the Second. And the room which, though few people had actually seen it, had helped to swell his peculiar fame was called the "Lion's Den." Strange scenes were said to be enacted there sometimes.

His dining room was built like a banquetting hall in an ancient Roman palace. The floor was of white marble, and the domed ceiling was of blue and gold mosaic, the pillars supporting its arches were of pink granite, and there were wonderful curtains of Syrian-dyed purple silk, bordered with scroll patterns in gold. Against this purple background statues of beautiful nude figures stood out in gleaming white, for Macaire was a patron of the arts, and his tastes were distinctly French.

Under the open-work embroidery and lace insertion of the table-cover was cloth of gold; and the plate was gold also, glittering under the electric lights that starred the blue vault of the ceiling. In such a room, and at such a table, the men in their modern evening dress looked oddly out of keeping; but none so incongruous as the host himself.

With the cigars came a gold cigarette case for each guest, with his own monogram in diamonds; and when the last pretty dancer had bowed her lightly-draped figure away behind one of the purple curtains and no man cared for more wine—even Lionel Macaire's wine—the host suggested to his most honored guest an adjournment to the "cellar" (as he called it), where something amusing might be expected.

A quiet smile went round the circle at Nero's way of referring to the "Lion's Den." Every man knew that he was in for some good sport.

They left the dining room, coming out into an immense hall, then through several passages, which led them at last to a fine billiard room. In one wall was a great cupboard, which held all sorts of odds and ends; and at the back of this was a concealed door which opened with a spring. Its existence would have been difficult for anyone save an expert in such matters to discover unassisted; and only two of the millionaire's most trusted employees were in the secret, though there were whispers in the servants' hall concerning a mystery in the house. The architect and the builder had kept their own counsel, as had Macaire's favored guests, and if the millionaire sometimes provided illegal diversions for his friends there was little danger of an interruption from rudely raiding police.

When the concealed door had retired into the wall as magician fingers touched the hidden spring, a flight of marble stairs could be seen, illuminated by electric lights set on either side. At the bottom of the steps was an open space floored and walled with marble. Here were two closed doors of oak. One of these Lionel Macaire opened, and his guests, led by Royalty, filed into a curious room.

It was, as he had said, in the cellar, but it had no connection with the other cellars under the huge house. It could be entered by two doors only; one, through which the party had just come, and another opening into an adjoining apartment.

The room was thirty feet square at least, and as plain as the rest of the house was elaborate. Round the walls were rows of cushioned seats of walnut wood, sloping upward in tiers. They would have accommodated a hundred people, instead of the dozen here to-night. These seats walled in a conventional roped "ring"—a square about twenty feet in dimension. At each corner of this square was a big silver punch bowl, in lieu of a basin, a silver jug filled with scented water, and a great bloated-looking sponge.

At sight of these preparations the guests at once knew what sort of entertainment was in store for them. Even those who were familiar with the Lion's Den had been uncertain till this moment, for the only permanent furnishings in the place consisted of the rows of seats along the wall. Everything else could be changed according to necessity.

Close to the ring were two chairs, and as Macaire and his friends entered two men rose from these, bowing slightly. Their faces were known to several of the guests. One was a well known referee, the other a man appointed to act as time-keeper in the anticipated sport. The former had just come in from the next room, where the principals in the scene about to be enacted had stripped for weighing, and might soon be expected to appear.

When one of the front rows of seats had been sparsely occupied, all eyes turned towards the closed door of that next room.

Presently it opened, and three men came slouching in. One was of middle-age, or near it, with closely-cropped, carrot-red hair, thick and bristly, a straight line of auburn eyebrow meeting across a pugnacious nose; fierce, deep-set little eyes, like those of an angry pig; a protruding chin that locked the lips above it tightly together when they were shut; and the chest and arms of a giant. He wore loose white drawers, canvas shoes that made no noise when he moved; and as he came forward he grinned at the audience, suggestively clenching his hammer-like fists and swelling out his biceps so that the muscles rose like springs of iron under the dark, hairy skin.

This was Joey the Kid, and the two with him would see him through the fight.

The trio took their places at one corner of the ring, and a moment later another three came in at the door they had left open.

A tall, slim young fellow, dressed as the Kid was dressed, entered with his second and a trusted servant of Macaire's, who had performed many a queer office in this room. The newcomer looked, compared with Joey the Kid, like Antinous beside Hercules, or David with Goliath. Stripped to the waist, his face and throat bronze, his body marble, he seemed hardly more than a youth; but the eyes eagerly criticising his form could find no fault with it. A Greek sculptor of old, in search of a model for a young athlete, would have seen in him perfection. Yet, beautiful as his body was to the eye, it appeared a monstrous injustice to match his youthful strength against the browny bulk of the big professional prize-fighter.

Macaire himself made the necessary announcement. He told his guests that the match was to be under 11st. 10lb., and was between Joe Nash, whom they knew as Joey the Kid, and an amateur, who, having no name in English sporting circles, claimed the right to remain anonymous until after the fight. He (Macaire) vouched for him, and guaranteed that his record was no more than it professed to be. Nash had just now been weighed at 11st. 9lb. in the weighing chair in the next room, his opponent touching 10st. 8lb. The conditions of the fight were the best of twenty three-minute rounds with two-ounce gloves. It it ran to the full length it would be decided by points.

Having given this information, he put in a flattering word for the referee, who looked pleased, and the prologue to the play was over; the act about to begin.

The slim young man and the hairy giant came forth from their respective corners and grasped each other's hands, the former's second (who had been his sparring partner) eyeing the pair furtively, his face eager.

By this time each man in the audience had his favorite. Note-books were out, and bets had been recorded. Few believed that the unknown amateur had a chance against the Kid, and Hope Newcome felt adverse opinions hanging heavy in the air, oppressing his chest.

He was half ashamed of himself for what he was about to do, yet nothing on earth would now have induced him to draw back. It was all for Winifred. Already he had been able to help her. If he could win this fight, and winning it, step into the place which Lionel Macaire had promised him, he would tell Winifred the truth about the mission which had brought him to England, and ask her if, in spite of all it entailed upon him, she would promise to be his wife. He dared not think that she loved him, but she had been heavenly sweet, and it might be that she had learnt to care, just a little, during the days that they had been "partners." With money he could at least try his luck. For, if he got it, it would be his money, honestly though strangely earned. He was going to do all he knew to earn it now.

Newcome and Joey the Kid had never seen each other until they had walked out half stripped from the partitioned space which they had used as dressing closets in the next room.

He had heard all that could be heard of the big man's record from his own sparring partner, and that all was not encouraging to him. He had expected to see a giant, but the Kid had proved even more formidable to look at than Newcome's fancy had painted him; and the younger man, having so much to gain or lose, had experienced a qualm of misgiving as his eyes and the little pig-eyes of the noted prize-fighter had met.

Now, however, with the touch of the other's hand, all nervousness went. Never in his life had Hope Newcome felt more cool, more confident in himself. Realizing fully the almost desperate task to which he had pledged himself, he trusted that if he could not win the fight, at least his own splendid condition would make him no despicable foe for the hero of the ring against whom he was pitted. His muscles were like elastic and steel, his nervous energy thrilled in every fibre of his being. He had carefully trained for this fight, and his shining skin, the clear whites of his eyes, showed him to be in the height of physical condition. As he moved his arms the muscles rippled under the skin or shot out into smooth swelling contours, hard as ivory, as he clenched his fists and fell easily and lightly into fighting position.

The first round was merely experimenting. Each man was studying the other. Joey was clearly rather disdainfully wondering why Macaire had pitted him against this slim youth, whom he thought, in the pride of the bully, that he could "fight with one hand." Yet he did not want to be led into a trap. There might be more science in the youngster than he knew of. So he stood at first mainly on the defensive, letting Newcome begin the attack; then suddenly made one of the rushes that had often brought disaster to his antagonists. The young man saw his danger; dodged like lightning, ducking quickly under the other's arm, breaking to the left, breaking to the right; then, just as time was called, he got in a smacking blow on the Kid's low forehead, which made him shake his head like an angry bull. It was a case of honors divided, but the dashing round of three minutes was enough to prove to Newcome that he must call on all his science, all his strength, if he were to even hold his own with this formidable antagonist.

The next few rounds were keenly, warily fought. There was a quick pattering of feet on the sawdust, an occasional vicious grunt from the Kid as he struck a heavier blow than usual, the sullen thud of the gloves.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Baron Von Zellheim.

So far Newcome had been successful in the game of strategy he had set himself to play. He began to think that his task might be easier than he had supposed it. He had broken with his guard, or avoided by his quickness the most dangerous blows that had been aimed at him, and he had got home several slapping knocks on Joey's face. For an instant he lost his head, and, enticed by his opponent's apparent listlessness, he rushed in recklessly.

Next moment he repented, for he received a terrific upper cut that jarred his spine, and sent him reeling across the ring. Joey was after him in a flash, trying to pin him in a corner and settle him; but Newcome had still strength to dodge this way and that, escaping with another sounding blow upon the ribs. It was almost a disaster, and when time was called he could barely stagger to his stool, gasping like a newly-landed fish.

The flood of cold, pungently-scented water squeezed over his head from the great sponge brought his faculties more under control. He took a sip of brandy; his legs lost their numbness. As he rose for the next round, game still, though tottering a little, there was a murmur of encouragement from the spectators, hushed to breathlessness as Joey rushed joyously in to finish his victim.

But Newcome was not to be easily caught again. He dodged and ducked, dexterously avoiding the dangerous corners into which his antagonist would have driven him, and came scatheless but dizzy through the round. Another minutes's rest, another sponging of the head and sip of brandy, and he was able to face his man again. But he was weak from the tremendous battering he had received, and the prize-fighter seemed determined to finish the fight there and then. The pace was getting too hot; the Kid's breaths came and went in hissing gasps. He wanted to knock out his man before the latter's youth, better condition and extreme quickness could turn the scale against his own greater strength. Grinning viciously, he rushed on his haggard opponent, and Newcome heeded all his agility to save himself from the mad fury of the attack. Just at the end of the round the prize-fighter landed a straight right-hander on Newcome's throat, and the young man, lifted from his feet and hurled across the ring, seemed to the excited spectators to have received the knock-out blow which they all had feared must come sooner or later.

Actually the impact of the blow was less severe than it seemed, and Newcome, while appearing to fall like a log, had really practised something like a stage fall. He let it seem that he was badly hurt, alowed his seconds to support him to his chair, and lay back panting, with his eyes closed. No one who looked at him believed that he could go through another round. Macaire, was sulkily disappointed, and Macaire's guests considered the fight practically over.

Newcome was thinking to himself much the same. He knew that he was over-matched in strength, in mere brute hiting power, if not in skill and science; and he bitterly realized that at any instant the end might come. One device only was left to him, and that he resolved to put into practice at once. When time was called he rose languidly, and staggered towards the centre of the ring. A pang of pity for a victim pluckily determined to fight it out to the last against desperate odds softened the eyes of the spectators. The Kid's attack seemed irresistible. Exasperated at the long resistance, furious that so many rounds had been fought without victory declaring herself in his favor, he rushed at his young antagonist like an angry bull. But in the passion of the assault the prize-fighter, counting now on certain triumph, relaxed his caution. It was the chance for which Newcome had watched and waited and schemed. Calling on his final reserve of energy, summoning his last ounce of strength, he shot out a clean, tremendous blow, the full weight of the body behind it, and it caught the giant full on the point of his square, resolute jaw. The Kid's hands whirled up helplessly, he fell crashing down, full on his back, his limbs twitching, a low moaning coming from his parted lips. Newcome stood over him, wondering at what he had done, fearing that the giant would rise to renew the fight, but the time-keepers monotonous voice crying the seconds from one to ten, while still the prize-fighter lay helpless and unconscious, told his benumbed brain that the victory was his—a victory jealously snatched from the jaws of defeat.

He hardly saw the limp body of his unconscious opponent carried away to the next room. Voices drummed in his ears like the buzzing of bees. Half-dazed still, he realized that Macaire was shaking his hand, that others were crowding near.

"After such a triumph you can be anonymous no longer," the millionaire was saying. "Gentlemen, I want to introduce to you my friend Baron von Zellheim, a name you must all have heard, a man you will be glad to meet."

(To be continued.)

Scribbles—"Wright's new book 'Life in the Slums' failed to make a hit, I hear." Dribbles—"Yes. He had no idea of poverty—only poverty of ideas."—Chicago Daily News.

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