

The Double Squeeze

By Henry Beach Needham

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Tris Ford deserted his private office shortly after high noon, and went to the locker-room—an unheard-of proceeding for him. Then he waited round impatiently. On the dot, at the clock pointed to 12:30, a triumphal procession moved ceremoniously into the presence of the chief of the Giant-killers.

At its head was Barney Larkin, a smile upon his boyish face and a cocky look in his eye that brought joy and comfort to the manager. Close behind was Ernest Steadman, also smiling. Next came an inconspicuous citizen, easily mistaken for a prosperous traveling man—the clever detective. Bringing up the rear were



Tris Ford Laughed. He Couldn't Help It.

two low-browed fellows—either pugilists in ordinary or highly efficient piano shifters.

Tris Ford laughed. He couldn't help it.

Although the team, with one exception, was not a party to the deep, dark secret, the players plainly shared the relief which Tris experienced at sight of Barney Larkin. They sang as they put on their uniforms, and one would have supposed, to look in upon them, that they were preparing for morning practice in the training season, instead of getting ready to fight for the highest honors of the town—and the popularity of the home town.

Wild tumult broke loose at sight of the Giant-killers, answering the yell which had gone up on the appearance of the Phillies. There were the usual preliminaries—all before cameras. There was snappy practice by the Nationals. Then the Giant-killers took the field, to limber up and get their grip on the ball and sure fire into their throats.

"Hit 'er out!" An acute-sighted fan jumped up in his place back of first, and ignoring the shouts of "Down in front!" scanned the playing field from a point near second base to the Giant-killers' bench much as an anxious mother would look for her lost child. Then in agonized accents he demanded of space: "Where's Wils Shute?"

Eyes by the thousand traveled to the edge of the clay-base path in right. There an uneasy substitute was trying his hardest to accomplish the impossible—all the spiked shoes of the king of second basemen.

What on the terrestrial ball did it mean? Was Tris Ford crazy?

Tardily, fifteen minutes after the hour set for the game to begin, the official announcer raised his megaphone and sing-songed the opposing batteries. The fans howled with delight when they heard that Barney Larkin was to pitch for the Giant-killers, although they knew it, of course. But when the announcer added that Peris was to "play second base in place of Shute" the fans gave loud vent to their disapproval. "What's the matter—Wils Shute hurt?" they shrieked.

Around the vast assemblage, starting in the press box, flying through the grand stand, leaping to the pavilions, reaching at last to the bleachers, sped the answer:

"He's disappeared!" Gloom, impenetrable gloom, settled down upon a majority of the great throng—those who had come to help the Giant-killers win. Their quick minds were recalling what the rival manager, John Marlin, had given out after the Giant-killers downed New York. They remembered every word of it:

"I want to go on record as saying that Shute is the greatest ball player

in the world. He wins more games for his club than any other man on the diamond today—and winning games is what counts in baseball. He was directly responsible for two of the games which his team won from us, and was there all the time in the other two victories. In defensive work he was easily the king-pin, breaking up our defense and making sensational plays around second base. The record shows that he led his own team in the attack. I say again—Shute is the greatest ball player in the world. With him no major-league team would be weak—without him the best team would be seriously crippled."

Seriously crippled!

Over in New York a few feet away from the ticker, which was announcing the beginning of play, Jake Stinger and his friends were already celebrating.

PART II.

At Sea.

An unshaven, disheveled young man, hatless but otherwise completely dressed down to his shoes, turned over on the bed, opened his sticky eyes, then closed and dug his fists into them to dissipate the heaviness of the lids. He tried vainly to moisten his parched lips with his swollen tongue.

His nose itched tormentingly and he rubbed it vigorously with the back of his hand.

As consciousness returned, haltingly and with brief lapses into stupor, his brain and the senses of taste, smell and sight began to correlate, slowly but accurately—due to the native resilience of an unabused constitution.

A peculiar taste in his mouth he couldn't label. To one whose lips had



The Fans Howled With Delight When They Heard That Barney Larkin Was to Pitch for the Giant-Killers.

never "known the taste of liquor" it was indescribable—indescribably bad, nauseating.

But the smell that rose from some part of his clothing he recognized. It was the repellent odor that exuded from a saloon when the rubber-tired doors swung open. It was stale liquor! And it had been spilled on his clothes. Following this loathsome discovery, he raised his hand toward his nose and again he was startled to get another whiff of stale liquor. A shudder of disgust passed through him. He now took a second invoice of the taste in his mouth and classified it as "dark brown." But not yet could he bring his logy mentality to take up the trail from effect back to cause.

His bed next attracted his attention. It was narrow—much like a shelf with a wooden side to prevent one's falling out. Looking up, he saw above him what, judging from the woven-wire springs, was another narrow bed. The furnishings of the apartment or cell, whatever it was, all tethered to something permanent, were at first unfamiliar to him. It was the aperture admitting the light that helped him fix the room and its location. This round opening to the outside world was a bull's-eye of thick glass. And as he stared through the circular window on to grayness—nothing more—there came a loud thump, instantly followed by a stinging sound, as if minute pellets

had been thrown against the glass fiercely. Then water ran off, leaving the bull's-eye flecked with drops.

His mind bridged the gap between present predicament and past experience. He recalled the Giant-killers' trip to Cuba after they had won the Cuts—the days on the high and low seas. He knew now. He was aboard ship!

Secure in this conclusion, he brought himself to a sitting posture on the edge of the berth. In an upright position he found that he was inclined to dizziness. But he fought it off, got to his feet and, letting down the wash-basin, soused his head in cold water—all the water the tank contained. This revived him wonderfully.

He looked about the stateroom more carefully. There was a suitcase of real leather on the bunk under the porthole. He was positive he had never seen it before. Turning it round, he found on the end, in black lettering, the inscription:

S. W. JAMES
New York.

"S. W. J. a-m-e-s" he questioned. He recalled all the Jameses he had ever heard of—they weren't many—from "Cyclone," the Yankee pitcher, who had struck him out twice in one game, to Jesse and Henry—train robber and author respectively. There was no "S. W." in the list.

Magnificently he tried the bag to see if it was locked. It opened, displaying a complete assortment of linen and underclothing. There were shirts, handkerchiefs, stockings, brush and comb—everything necessary, with the suit he had on, to enable him to make a respectable appearance. The things had been carefully selected and they were all new. But there wasn't a scrap of writing to identify their owner.

This turned his attention to his own means of identification. Putting his hand in his pocket, he drew out four envelopes contained bills—one an "ac'd dressed to S. W. James, Hotel Longacre, New York city. Two of the envelopes contained bills—one on "account rendered" from a liquor dealer for \$67.25; the other a bill for cigars and cigarettes amounting to \$23.50. The third was a letter from the steamship agents of the Hamard line, reading:

"Dear sir: We have booked you for passage from New York to Naples on the S. S. Colonia, sailing from pier foot of West Thirteenth street, N. R. We have assigned to you Cabin C 259, on the salon deck, and have arranged that you are to have it entirely to yourself.

"We beg to call your attention to the fact that, owing to the tide on the day of departure, the Colonia will sail at one o'clock in the morning, October 7."

The fourth envelope disclosed a

ticket calling for one first-class passage, New York to Naples, on the steamship Colonia, and made out to S. W. James. There was nothing else in the pockets of his coat.

Robbed! was his first thought, and he searched in his trousers pocket for the cash which he had with him—less than ten dollars. He found many yellow-backed bills. Five hundred dollars!

The sight of the five hundred dollars immediately brought to mind what had happened before the long, dreamless sleep just ended on the ship. This money—or five hundred dollars just like it—was lying on a table in a suite of rooms in the Belmont-Stratworth hotel. He was about to come into possession of it—all for signing a contract to report the world series on behalf of the Transcontinental Newspaper syndicate, Metropolitan tower, New York city.

He sat down again upon the berth to puzzle it out, beginning with the letter from the syndicate—it was on engraved stationery, he remembered. The secretary, Walter Noble, gave him as references three well-known New Yorkers. But the letter had come, special delivery, on Sunday—the day after the championship was clinched—and reply was requested by telegraph on Monday. Anyhow, what need was there of references, he had argued, when he couldn't lose! For he was to receive five hundred dollars every day he turned in a story. No, he couldn't lose, and he could make thirteen hundred dollars at least—nineteen hundred dollars at most. Yes, he had looked upon it as "very easy" money and had kept his own counsel, not even confiding in Tris Ford, because of the reports in the newspapers that the national commission was to prohibit the players from writing for the papers; certainly all those who hadn't contracts.

He remembered that he had gone to the Belmont-Stratworth, and the clerk at the desk knew him—had seen him play. He could repeat his words: "Mr. Noble is expecting you—go right up to Suite 1142." He had gone up, had

(To Be Continued.)

DOULTRY NOTES

- Feed a dry mash.
- Keep house and yard clean.
- Provide roosts and dropping boards.
- Provide a nest for each four or five hens.
- Make the house dry and free from drafts, but allow for ventilation.
- Keep hens free from lice and the house free from mites.
- Kill and eat the hens in the summer and fall as they begin to molt and cease to lay.
- A clean cellar, two-thirds below ground surface, makes a good place to set the incubator.
- Nature teaches us that fowls should have a wide range and that a farm is the best place for them.
- The fall renovation of the poultry business should include a thorough survey of the feed bins and corn cribs.
- Idle hens soon grow too fat to lay and in the plans for winter it is well to provide some means to compel them to work.
- Incubator chicks are just as strong as hen hatched, all else being equal.
- Don't expect great success in hatching and raising chicks unless you have had some experience.
- Preserve the surplus eggs produced during the spring and summer for use during the fall and winter when eggs are scarce and high in price.

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\$93.00 an hour has been figured by many of these students to be a conservative estimate to them of the value of the spare moments spent in study of I.C.S. Courses.

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