

Wide-Open Eyes

All the world loves a storyteller. To illustrate this, a mischievous lecturer once caught his university audience about and yanked away from an honest pun, so he told them a boy-misadventure yarn. It was the most banal, stupid, and wholly predictable little plot he could dream up. Yet—as he lightly told them all a few minutes later—he supposedly sophisticated audience perked up and listened with whole absorption while he foisted the boring little misadventure on them. It was suggested that he give up lecturing and tell more stories, good ones this time.

Irvin S. Cobb was the classic stylist of storytelling. He could enthrall you even if you'd heard him tell the same story before. His was a literary craftsmanship, something very close to an art, which kept you all at once listening and waiting and still wishing he'd never come to the point.

Such storytellers are rare, but, when they appear, all the more welcome for it. And welcome in *Esquire* is an author who belongs high up on the list—William Francis. On page 28 of this issue is his latest *Esquire* contribution, *Wide Open With Open*. Mr. Francis has the true storyteller's touch for the plot, eye for character, and intangible timing that all add up to good writing and good reading.

Not, because he's in *Esquire*, but because he really has a way with a story, we recommend Mr. Francis to you.

Although, come to think of it, maybe both reasons are really the same.

—D.A.R.

DAVID L. SMART

Editor and Publisher

ALFRED SMART

Co-Publisher

WILLIAM L. BERNARDSON	Managing Editor
JOHN H. BERNARDSON	Publicity Editor
JOHN B. BERNARDSON	Art Director
JOHN B. BERNARDSON	Production Editor
JOHN B. BERNARDSON	Research Editor
JOHN B. BERNARDSON	Circulation Editor
JOHN B. BERNARDSON	Business Manager

Assistant Editors

WILLIAM L. BERNARDSON	WILLIAM L. BERNARDSON
JOHN B. BERNARDSON	JOHN B. BERNARDSON
JOHN B. BERNARDSON	JOHN B. BERNARDSON

European Editor: ALFRED SMART

Esquire

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEN



contents for May, 1948

Vol. XXIX

No. 1

Whole No. 174

articles

STORIES—WILLIAM L. BERNARDSON	27
STORIES—JOHN H. BERNARDSON	28
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	29
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	30
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	31
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	32
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	33
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	34
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	35
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	36

departments

Correspondence: THE HOUSE AND THE FISH	37
Correspondence: THE HOUSE AND THE FISH	38
Correspondence: THE HOUSE AND THE FISH	39
Correspondence: THE HOUSE AND THE FISH	40
Correspondence: THE HOUSE AND THE FISH	41
Correspondence: THE HOUSE AND THE FISH	42
Correspondence: THE HOUSE AND THE FISH	43
Correspondence: THE HOUSE AND THE FISH	44
Correspondence: THE HOUSE AND THE FISH	45
Correspondence: THE HOUSE AND THE FISH	46

fiction

STORIES—WILLIAM L. BERNARDSON	47
STORIES—JOHN H. BERNARDSON	48
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	49
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	50
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	51
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	52
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	53
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	54
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	55
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	56
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	57
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	58
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	59
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	60
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	61
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	62
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	63
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	64
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	65
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	66
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	67
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	68
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	69
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	70
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	71
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	72
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	73
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	74
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	75
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	76
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	77
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	78
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	79
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	80
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	81
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	82
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	83
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	84
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	85
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	86
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	87
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	88
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	89
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	90
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	91
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	92
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	93
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	94
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	95
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	96
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	97
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	98
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	99
STORIES—JOHN B. BERNARDSON	100

personality

A STRANGE OLD FASHION	101
-----------------------	-----

book recommendations

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER (Part II)	102
-------------------------------------	-----

sports

THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	103
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	104

pictorial features

THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	105
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	106
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	107
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	108
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	109
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	110
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	111
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	112
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	113
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	114
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	115
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	116
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	117
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	118
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	119
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	120
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	121
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	122
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	123
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	124
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	125
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	126
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	127
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	128
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	129
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	130
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	131
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	132
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	133
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	134
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	135
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	136
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	137
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	138
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	139
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	140
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	141
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	142
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	143
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	144
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	145
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	146
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	147
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	148
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	149
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	150
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	151
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	152
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	153
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	154
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	155
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	156
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	157
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	158
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	159
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	160
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	161
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	162
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	163
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	164
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	165
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	166
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	167
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	168
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	169
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	170
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	171
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	172
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	173
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	174
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	175
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	176
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	177
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	178
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	179
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	180
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	181
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	182
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	183
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	184
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	185
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	186
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	187
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	188
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	189
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	190
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	191
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	192
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	193
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	194
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	195
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	196
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	197
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	198
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	199
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	200

essentials

THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	201
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	202
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	203
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	204
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	205
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	206
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	207
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	208
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	209
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	210
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	211
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	212
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	213
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	214
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	215
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	216
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	217
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	218
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	219
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	220
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	221
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	222
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	223
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	224
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	225
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	226
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	227
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	228
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	229
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	230
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	231
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	232
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	233
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	234
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	235
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	236
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	237
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	238
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	239
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	240
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	241
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	242
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	243
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	244
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	245
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	246
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	247
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	248
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	249
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	250
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	251
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	252
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	253
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	254
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	255
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	256
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	257
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	258
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	259
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	260
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	261
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	262
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	263
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	264
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	265
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	266
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	267
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	268
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	269
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	270
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	271
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	272
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	273
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	274
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	275
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	276
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	277
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	278
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	279
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	280
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	281
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	282
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	283
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	284
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	285
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	286
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	287
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	288
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	289
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	290
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	291
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	292
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	293
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	294
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	295
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	296
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	297
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	298
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE	299
THE OLD FASHIONED FUTURE	300

credits

THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE, ELEMENTS' LITERATURE	
OF FORTY-EIGHT YEARS	Ed. Butler
THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE, ELEMENTS' LITERATURE	Ed. Butler

Backstage with Esquire

was, a woman actually based about a money lender who, like the hero of his story, "Mr. Minkie the New York," planned to meet his predecessor during the course of a business trip. The author was never able

to track down Macintyre, and his current fictional piece represents what he thinks should have happened. Jenkins is known as a regular contributor to many magazines (beginning with *The Smart Set* when he was seventeen), and including many books, motion-pictures and radio scripts. He lives in "Arlington," an old house in Virginia in which Nathaniel Bacon is said to have died in 1676. He pretends that he has his original wife as well as four daughters.



Will F. Jenkins

"Ex" Marks the Sore Spot

When first and second husbands meet, can the third be far behind? Horace had a great deal more than a wife in common with his much flattered "masterful" predecessor

A Story by WILL F. JENKINS

HORACE WATER arrived in Detroit with a letter meant to be brief. Even Horace, his wife, did not suspect it. The secret was that Horace had made an appointment to lunch with Emma's first husband in Detroit on Wednesday, and he was scared to death. He'd written to Marvin originally out of a mortal wish to see the pleasant boy whose memory—more especially when Horace was in disgrace—reminded Emma in painful bewailing. But the letter granting the appointment bothered him.

"Dear sir," said the reply from Marvin (First Husband) Bruce: "I shall be happy to meet you at Jones' Chop House at 10:30 on Wednesday. I shall wear a coronation in my buttonhole and will have a table reserved for two. After a light lunch we can adjourn elsewhere for further discussion if you wish."

Horace found a note of unknown origin in that letter. Surely, Marvin was contemptuously amused at the thought of meeting Emma's second husband. He might derive himself merely by deceiving half-wit drunks at lunch, and raucous laughter when he contemplated Horace. On the other hand, he might suggest visiting a gymnasium so that he and Horace could vent their primal emotions upon each other.

Horace's emotions, however, were not primordial. He'd started the business, as he would not back down—but he considered a detective agency. Early on Wednesday morning he interviewed a reliable operative.

"You know the setup?" he asked.

"Yeah," said the operative.

"My wife's name is Emma," said Horace. "She was married to this Marvin guy for three years. Then she found him philandering with a blonde and gave him the gate. But she still carries a torch for him," continued Horace bitterly, "and I'm hung up in the middle. Marvin, you see, never lost any romance from cab drivers, he had perfect manners, and made a hell of a lot more money than I do. Until the blonde came along Marvin never forgot Emma's birthday, her wedding anniversary, or the day she converted to be his. Marvin was a huge and beautiful brute and she crowned over him. I don't make her wrong, you see?"

"Yeah," said the operative. "You want me to paste him a few."

"Pardon the thought," said Horace. "But if he wants to paste me a few, you might encourage the idea."

Then he went into the further necessary details. He told the operative about their apartment, his income, Emma's family, her tastes in food, and her good works. Then he said glumly: "That's enough to put it over. I'll be looking on. I was a fool to start this. . . ."

"Yeah," said the operative. "But don't worry. I got it."

Horace felt sure then. But he was a most fretful fellow and Emma's marital reminiscences constantly referred to Marvin's splendid physique. Horace was in that depressed psychological state which comes of accepting, however unwillingly, one's wife's expressed opinion of oneself.

Arriving early at Jones' Chop House, he looked a water tentatively to find out which table was reserved for Mr. Bruce, and to give him a place just two tables away. He slumped in his chair, which was at a sort of chimney-two-person setup against a column.

A brisk voice said brightly in his ear: "Look here, old man! If you're not waiting for someone you'll do me a great favor to let me sit with you!"

Horace looked up warily. The stranger was also a stout five-foot-four, but he was all that Horace would like to be. Where Horace wore garments of conservative pattern and dignified cut, this other man wore vivid trends, cut negligently for sport. Where Horace wore a polished toothbrush mustache, the other wore a jauntily waved and pointed mustache. And where Horace's whole manner was low-keyed and hunched, that of his rival-in was bristly to the point of rudeness, and he had that snapping roll to his eyes which in happier days Horace had sometimes observed in himself.

"Oh, sit down by all means," said Horace. "I'm looking alone."

He watched with increasing awe as his new companion looked to a waiter with a lordly air, and jauntily but ingenuously gave his lunch order. Horace himself tended to wriggle before waiters.

Then there was a stirring, two tables away. Two tall men, athletic in build and prepared in appearance, sat down and faced each other politely. Horace dismissed one instantly. He was the detective-agency operative hired for the occasion. But the

other had a coronation in his buttonhole and would therefore be Marvin (First Husband) Bruce. And him Horace despised instantly. He was large, handsome and beefy, with the calm—not to say dumb—expression of the sort of man women go for. He would be the kind to flirtatious coquette with one blow, to remember anniversaries, and probably to dry dishes. Horace hoped that he could feel bound to take a few points at his successor in Emma's affections—the said successor being the private detective who knew he would be paid for jolting him. Horace ground his teeth. Then he heard a somewhere parking, "Majesty!"

He jerked his head back to his own table. His companion, the jauntily, two-sided individual, glared where the two brawny men had just seated themselves. He seemed to be struggling to repress untidy mirth. He slumped down his head on the tablecloth and looked at Horace with beaming eyes.

"Look!" he said jauntily. "This is too good to keep! Oh, it's too good! She's got one!"

Horace blinked at him.

"My first wife," said the self-confident man happily, "has a second husband. There he is! He's her ideal! Before she married me she was crazy about a football player in college. He threw her over in a moment of sanity, and she married me at a time when I was not mentally at my best. But all the time she was married to me she talked about the guy she could have married! How big and masterful he was! How thoughtful and tender! How taxi drivers gaped below him." The stranger laughed a soft laugh of parent gloom. "Now she's got another one out of the same lot! Big and masterful and tender! You can read it in his beautiful recent issue! He wrote me." Then he pointed to the man, fiddling (Continued on page 126)

"Ex" Marks the Sure Spot

Continued from page 215

with gloo. "Look! The ship at the bank."

Horus took one glance at the hired operative impersonating himself. Then he stared in horror at his companion.

"He won't me," chuckled the heavy small man, "he won't me a stuffy letter saying he was Emma's second husband and had loved a lot about me and he wanted to see me. Nothing openly nasty, you understand, but the idea was plain. Emma's told him I was a damned brute, and he's filled with the noble and tender resolve to hunt me to a jolly far far even, uh! So I hired an amiable braver to meet him and . . ."

Horus smiled, lowered. He said weakly, "No, Marvin, I'm Emma."

There was silence. All about them rose the clatter of china and cutlery and the sound of voices. But at the table where Horus sat with his wife's first husband there was silence. The two small men gazed at each other, appalled.

"I," said Horus volubly, "I'm Emma's second husband. I hired a man to meet you, because your letter sounded intelligent to me, too. I didn't have any plans for battle," he added with a sigh. "I—just wanted to meet the marvellous brute who was her first husband. I'm glad to meet you, Marvin."

The little man with the heavy mustache looked at Horus and his expression of horror, it changed from blindness to comprehension.

"How do you do, Horus," he said warmly. He put out his hand. Horus shook it firmly. "Well, well! And here is Emma! In the flesh, I trust?"

"Yes," Horus said weakly. "Study—I think she expects having divorced you. She talks of you occasionally. I—I had the impression that you were—different."

The dagger small man looked at Horus's clothes, at his necktie. And his wholly hollow and knowledgeless air.

"Yes," said Emma's first husband warmly. "I was different. Did you think I was a big bank of brute like the chap I hired to appear for me?"

"Naturally," said Horus. He regarded his predecessor and physical twin with sympathy. "She's always talking about how marvellous you were."

"Marvellous!" Then Marvin stared at him in shocked sympathy. "She's pulling the same trick on you that she did on me!

Fella, am I sorry for you! Does she say I always behaved 'real decent'?"

"She does," said Horus gloomily. "Did you?"

"Does she say I played her up and carried her? She pulled that on me as the first father's trick and I nearly landed a gun trying to duplicate him!" Then, in horrified realization, "And she's talking to you about an ex-husband? My heart bleeds for you!"

"Thanks," said Horus. "I guess you know the setup."

The dagger small man pulled a wallet out of his pocket.

"My second wife," he said, showing a photograph. "She was my secretary. That's the you of us on our honeymoon right after Emma took the second hand, first a hand . . ."

Horus saw that Marvin's second wife was no taller than he was. She had a wide, plastic grin. She looked like somebody who would like to have fun. Who might enjoy here and places and musical comedies and night clubs and night even go fishing. She looked like some-

body.

"Get a load of me, guy?" said Marvin proudly. "Sally hasn't really cured me of Emma. She. You can see when I used to be like!"

Horus regarded his companion in the photograph—and the picture could have been of himself. The mustache was still a tooth-brush. The costume still showed Emma's paralyzing influence. Being married to Sally had produced a noticeable change in a costume much like himself. But at the time the picture was taken, Marvin hadn't yet fully spread his wings.

Now Marvin had changed like a grub crawled from the corner of matrimony with Emma. The lines of the field were not wrapped on Marvin. And that was not all. Horus knew that Marvin would sleep in violently colored pajamas and have beer in the refrigerator and very probably a married brother dinner and that nobody counted his cigars to see how many he'd smoked today. He could tell from Marvin's air of self-satisfaction that Marvin played poker when he felt like it, and if he won he was able to brag to his wife about it, and if he lost she would lend him some of the house-keeping money for funtion. He knew that Marvin had another blonde secretary now; that blonde was justly mad about her, and that Marvin was the most won-

cherful human being in the world.

Horne regarded Marvin Brown with the reverence a small boy would give to Dick Tracy in the flesh, and it showed. Marvin saw it.

"Gosh!" said Horne, in stunned wonder. "It's...wonderful!"

"But it used to be bad!" said Marvin, complacently. "I'd been married to Emma for three years."

"I've been married to her for two," said Horne.

"Tut! Tut!" said Marvin. "After three years I was thinking of suicide. One day I was looking at a revolver in my desk drawer. Bally—she was my secretary then—came in and saw me. And she said, 'Mr. Brown, it's not that bad! If you want to change things . . . I did! So she gave me a snapshot of herself in a bathing suit. That was all. I put it in my wallet. Emma found it, and demanded that I live Bally, or else she'd divorce me! Can you imagine a man throwing away a chance like that?"

Horne sighed wistfully.

"She went to Reno and got the divorce. In three months I took Bally out to dinner. To my intense astonishment she was a nice kid. So I married her."

Horne smiled, sighed again.

"Gee," said Horne, pausingly. "It's wonderful just...just to hear about such things!"

Marvin expanded visibly. Then there was touch. A tall, athletic man two inches away had noticed another tall athletic man. The second distract person rocked back. The scene—Marvin Brown and the pseudo-Horne Wayne tangled splendidly in the middle of Junior Chap Brown. Flashers rushed. Police would shortly be on the way.

"Horn," said Marvin, "They'll be telling who hired them. Let's get out of here and have a drink somewhere else."

He rose, briskly picked up the two checks, and swaggered past the scene of outrage, where the brawlers battled for the sake of a lady neither had ever seen.

"You know," said Marvin expansively, as they reached the street, and Horne still regarded him with impassioned admiration.

"We're a lot alike . . . I'll tell you, Horne! You come out to my home to dinner tonight! Bally'll be glad to meet you. We'll talk things over. And, by George," continued Marvin, laughing, "you seem like a pretty good fellow! I'll introduce you to my wife's sister!"

■