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A Good Bluffer

By C. B. BURGESS

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The best bluffer I ever knew was
 Ned Thornton of Chicago. One win-
 ter Ned and I met in Berlin and went
 together to a students' ball. While
 Ned was dancing with a very pretty
 fraulein a young fellow who evidently
 had a claim upon her came up to him
 and said:

"I will pigstick you."
 That's the way they have over there
 of telling a man that he's got to fight.
 Ned turned upon him with well as-
 sumed fury and replied:
 "And I will let the sawdust out of
 you."

Later a dapper officer with a
 wasp waist stepped up to Ned and
 handed him a card on which was en-
 graved "Lieutenant Ernst von Batter-
 stein."

Ned, understanding that the officer
 addressed him as bearer of a chal-
 lenge, whipped out his own card, on
 which he had scrawled, "Instructor of
 Fencing, No. - Dearborn Street, Chi-
 cago, U. S. A."

You see, Ned had known very well
 what was coming and with his usual
 quick foresight had prepared his first
 move. With a magnificent sweep of
 his arm he referred the lieutenant to
 me, and I agreed to meet the gentle-
 man at a cafe in the Unter den Linden
 in half an hour.

"Ned," I protested as soon as we
 were alone, "you can't bluff one of
 these young Germans with so palpable
 a device as that. My opinion is that
 we'd better jump the town. You
 know well enough you've never han-
 dled a foil in your life, and at shoot-
 ing you couldn't hit a ten story build-
 ing at ten paces. We don't duel any
 in America, and it's no disgrace to flee
 from these fellows who do. All we
 have to do is to lose ourselves for the
 rest of the night and take an early
 train in the morning."

"Oh, there's some better way out of
 it than that. Do you know what Gen-
 eral Grant said when going to attack
 his first enemy? He said that the oth-
 er fellow was probably as much scared
 as he was, and so he went on. Well,
 I've put at least the probability into
 this young man's head that I'm an ex-
 pert, and if he doesn't believe me he
 won't be sure that I'm not. You go
 and talk with his second and hear
 what he has to say."

I met Von Batterstein and to help
 Ned on in his game assumed a confi-
 dent air. I said as little as possible,
 for when a man is playing a desperate
 game it's best to let him do it all him-
 self. The slightest interference with
 Ned in this instance might cost him
 his life. When the lieutenant asked
 what weapons my friend as the chal-
 lenged party would choose I simply
 replied, "Folks, of course!" and as to
 other details I left them entirely to
 him, except that the affair should be
 settled at once, as my man had an en-
 gagement in Paris with a pupil who
 needed his services in an affair of the
 same sort.

I flattered myself that this was keep-
 ing up the "instructor in fencing" il-
 lusion pretty well. If the principal on
 the other side had been an officer in
 the army the pretense couldn't be re-
 lied on, for a soldier can't very well
 back out from sure death. But the
 would be pigsticker was a civilian,
 and that wasn't so bad. The officer
 didn't appear in the least frightened,
 but he was not the man who would
 have to meet a fencing master.

It was arranged, in order that Ned
 should meet his engagement in Paris,
 that we should be at a rendezvous
 where such affairs are settled at 6
 o'clock the same morning. I went
 back and reported the outcome to Ned.
 "What are you going to do?" I asked.
 "You're certainly not going to let this
 fellow run a sword through your vi-
 tals."

"Oh, I'll keep up the bluff till the
 last minute, and if the thing goes
 against me I'll find a pretext to slide
 out with honor."

At 5:30 we took a carriage and drove
 to the rendezvous. I had left the pro-
 curement of the weapons to the enemy,
 saying that my principal could fence
 as well with a cutlass as a foil and I
 would rely on them for weapons. When
 we got on the ground the pig-
 sticker was looking over a stock of
 foils and testing them, evidently think-
 ing that if he was to meet a fencing
 master who didn't care whether he
 used a foil or a cutlass he must be
 carefully armed. It looked to me that
 the bluff game was up and Ned would
 have to wiggle out.

Just before taking position Ned sent
 me to the enemy to say that since he
 didn't wish to kill his antagonist he
 would give him the choice between
 losing an eye or having his nose cut
 off. I was to bring back word which
 of these the pigsticker preferred to
 lose.

I saw by the appearance of the prin-
 cipal on the other side when this cool
 proposition was announced to him that
 we had made a break. Von Batterstein
 took it to him, and they stood apart
 talking earnestly. I was in suspense
 as to the issue. Presently the lieuten-
 ant came to me and said that his prin-
 cipal had decided that the contest was
 too unequal to be undertaken and that
 since his enemy was about to leave
 for Paris the cause of the dissension
 would be removed.

Well, there was more palaver, but
 that was the end of it. The principals
 shook hands, and Ned invited the pig-
 sticker if he ever came to Chicago to
 visit his academy on Dearborn street.

Follow Me

By F. A. MITCHEL

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 Association.

I am known as Mesereau the climber.
 The guide upon whom I always re-
 lied when climbing in the region about
 Interlaken was Carl Weber, a German
 Swiss. He was brave and faithful,
 and I became very much attached to
 him. I had him with me in every
 climb I made out of Interlaken to the
 summits of the Wetterhorn, Eiger,
 Monk and Jungfrau. And frequently
 when I attempted ascents in the south-
 ern Alps I would send for him to
 come to me. He always responded
 with alacrity, and I knew that he
 would rather guide me than any one
 else.

After an adventure we had on the
 Matterhorn his affection for me was
 greatly enhanced. We were alone on
 the side of that razor backed peak
 when, walking on a snow edge, a
 crust gave way beneath me, and I fell.
 Weber, knowing that the only way to
 prevent his being dragged after me
 was to throw himself on the opposite
 side, did so. There we hung, each
 dangling over a precipice divided by
 a sharp edge of rock. Unfortunately
 Weber's right arm had become caught
 in a loop of the rope and a bone
 snapped.

"Herr," he called, "I cannot pull
 myself up. My arm is broken. I think
 there is snow beneath you. The rope
 must be cut. You will fall a short
 distance and may not be hurt."

"And you?"
 "I shall go down a thousand feet."
 "Then the rope shall not be cut. I
 will go up hand over hand and, strad-
 dling the edge, will pull you up."

This I did. I expected Weber would
 be overjoyed at his escape, but he did
 not appear to be so much pleased as
 one would suppose.

"Ach!" he exclaimed bitterly, "I
 shall never be the same man after
 having been saved by one I have guid-
 ed."
 This was the last time Weber and I
 ever climbed together. Not long af-
 terward, while conducting a party of
 Englishmen to the summit of Mont
 Blanc, the snow gave way beneath
 them, an avalanche was started, and
 they were all lost. Weber's body was
 found buried under thirty feet of
 snow, head down, his alpenstock held
 tight in the grip of his icy hand.

On hearing of my faithful guide's
 death I resolved that I would never
 climb again. This was partly because
 to climb without Weber would not be
 enjoyable and partly because his death
 caused me to realize that there is no
 safety in Alpine climbing even with
 the best guide. I refrained for two
 years; then, business calling me to
 Europe, I found myself near my be-
 loved Switzerland in the summer sea-
 son and ran down to Chamonix for a
 visit. Unfortunately for my resolution
 while at Chamonix I fell in with a
 party about to climb to the summit
 of Mont Blanc.

I stood looking up one morning at
 the magnificent sight of the mountain
 on which Weber had met his death,
 greatly tempted to make one more as-
 cent. I wondered if the soul of my
 guide, freed from flesh and the at-
 traction of gravitation, was sitting
 over the cliffs, galling through the
 vast splits between the peaks, revel-
 ing in being able to go like a bird
 wherever it pleased. Then came to
 me a superstitious dread lest if I wait
 I should meet with misfortune.

I determined to adhere to my resolu-
 tion to climb no more, when one of
 the party began to talk with me about
 the trip and when I spoke of remain-
 ing below manifested some surprise
 that such a "noted climber" should be
 content to see others go without going
 himself. This decided me to be one of
 the party.

We made the Grand Mulets, the hut
 built for a halfway stop, by evening
 and started the next morning under
 a cloudy sky for the summit. Within
 an hour we were enveloped in by far
 the worst snowstorm I had ever en-
 countered in any of my ascents. It
 was like an American blizzard, the
 snow falling in miniature spirals and
 deepening so rapidly that we soon
 found moving in any direction diffi-
 cult.

I have never before seen Alpine
 guides thoroughly frightened. "We
 must return to the Grand Mulets,"
 they all said, and, turning, we began
 to descend. But how could we de-
 scend any more than ascend, not be-
 ing able to see a distance of ten
 yards? If we stopped we would be
 overcome by the snow. If we proceed-
 ed we would likely go into a crevice
 or over a precipice. And what was
 the use of moving when we did not
 know which way to move?

I went out on a circumscribed ex-
 ploring trip and stood apart from the
 rest, awed by the whirling snow,
 when I heard a voice—a voice fam-
 iliar, never to be forgotten.
 "Herr, folgen sie mich!" (Sir, fol-
 low me).

At that moment I saw through the
 snowflakes a vague form a short dis-
 tance before me. Calling to the oth-
 ers to come, I followed it, they trall-
 ing in behind me. There were
 heights above and chasms below, but
 we walked near them without dan-
 ger. And there before us, flickering,
 now fading, disappearing, but always
 reappearing, was the figure.

Within twenty minutes we reached
 the Grand Mulets.
 Who or what led us to safety I
 leave for the reader to surmise.



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