

thinks he's the world's hardest detective."

"You don't understand him," Sally protested, experiencing a delightful feeling in the realization of the fact that she was talking for and upholding the man she loved. "All Pete's life has been a hard one. He told me that his father left him in a children's home, when his mother died, and he has been on his own hook ever since."

"Aw, he's just trying to play on your sympathy. I know his type," Carlson said, lighting a cigar.

"No!" Sally protested. "He's not like that. He just has a bitter outlook on life, because his father left him in that children's home in Sanford."

"What?" Carlson asked, leaning forward on the table, a strange look in his eyes. "What did you say that place was named?"

"Why, Mr. Carlson," Sally asked, astonished at the expression on his face, "What's the matter?"

"What about that place, where was it?"

"Sanford," Sally replied, "Sanford, Virginia."

Carlson slumped forward on the table, a sickly pallor on his face.

"What's wrong, Mr. Carlson?" Sally asked now, thoroughly alarmed at the look on the man's face.

"Want me to call a doctor?"

"No, no, I'm all right," he protested. "Are you sure that what you

were telling me is the truth?"

"Of course, that's what Pete told me. Why do you ask?"

"Listen, Sally," Carlson went on, leaning toward her. "You love Pete, don't you?"

"Yes, I do," Sally replied blushing.

"Well, he's down in the cellar now all tied up waiting to get shot as soon as Smith gets back with Red's gun."

Sally stifled a little cry of alarm.

"Don't worry," Carlson said suddenly. "I'm going down there and untie him. If I don't get back, you'll know that I at least did my best for him. Now you stay here and don't move. I'll send Pete up to you."

He left her and went down to the cellar.

"Did you bring my milk, Carlson?" Pete asked him lightly, as the man entered the room.

Carlson didn't answer. Instead, he walked over to Pete and stood looking intently in his face.

"Looking for something?" Pete asked sarcastically.

"Wilson wasn't your father's name, was it?" Carlson asked suddenly.

"Why do you ask me that? And furthermore, what business is it of yours what my father was named?"

"None, I suppose; only I thought you might not mind telling me."

"Well, I'll tell you," Pete said bitterly. "I ain't at all proud of it, because the old man didn't give me an even chance in life. He left me to be brought up in a regular hell! No, there's no reason why I shouldn't tell you. His name was Brown."

Carlson's shoulders slumped and he leaned heavily on a box.

"What the hell," Pete inquired. "Did your old man leave you like that, too?"

Carlson pulled himself together with an effort.

"Listen, Wilson," he said, cutting the ropes that bound Pete's hands and feet. "I'm turning you loose, see? But the others will be here in a few minutes and we'll have to fight our way out. And don't ask me why I let you loose."

Pete looked at him slightly astonished. "Suit yourself, Carlson," he replied. "But I'm telling you now. I got the goods on you and your gang. And don't get the idea that I'm going to let up on you just because you turned me loose. I'm going to clean you fellers out if it's the last damn thing I ever do!"

"Shut up!" Carlson hissed, show-



an ambulance. Carlson and Smith are dead, and there are two other men down stairs wounded."

"Oh!" Sally stifled a little cry of horror.

"Wait right here," Pete instructed, and went to find a telephone.

In a few minutes he returned and led her to a table. "I wonder what came over Carlson," he said suddenly, after he told her what had happened. "He came down stairs when I was tied up and asked me about my father. And when I told him he turned me loose. I got the goods on him. He was dealing in dope; the oily rascal!"

"Oh, Pete!" Sally cried suddenly, tears swelling up in her eyes and running down her cheeks. "You shouldn't say that; you mustn't!"

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Why are you crying?"

"I'm kind of glad he went like that," Sally replied, dabbing fiercely at her eyes. "Rather than have you send him to jail."

"What are you talking about?" Pete asked her mystifiedly.

But Sally never told him.

That morning a telegram was sent to the chief of the International Detective Agency in Washington, D.C. It read:

Everything cleaned out as ordered Stop Racket was dope Stop.

WILSON.
The next afternoon a low, racy roadster roared out of the town of Fairview, bearing a rumble seat full of bags and a very, very happy Mr. and Mrs. Pete Wilson—very, very close together on the front seat.

THE END.

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BASEBALL MAGNATE.

—John Clark, secretary of the Pittsburgh Crawfords. He is a printer by trade, a sportsman by choice.

ing a gun in Pete's hand. "Here they come down the steps!" He and Carlson hid behind separate boxes and waited for the door to open.

Smith was the first to come in the room. Jones and the little dark man followed him.

"Put 'em up, mugs!" Pete commanded, rising from his place behind the box.

The three men froze in their tracks.

"What th' hell!" Jones exclaimed.

"This just means that I got you cold," Pete went on. "And for keeps, too," he added. Out of the corner of his eye he could see Carlson rising from behind his box.

The others saw him, too, and a full realization of the thing dawned upon them.

"Why, you damned dirty, double-crossing bastard!" Smith hissed. And before Pete could prevent it, he pulled his gun and fired straight at Carlson.

Carlson also fired straight at Smith. Jones and the little dark man pulled their guns.

As luck would have it, they were facing him, so it was comparatively easy at that short distance to shoot both in their arms.

Carlson lay on the floor, a hole through his forehead. Smith was shot through the neck, and Jones and the little dark man were shot through the arms.

Pete tied these latter two up and went upstairs in the big room. The orchestra was playing and people were dancing, drinking, and laughing, all unaware of the tragedy that had occurred in the cellar beneath them.

When he was half way across the room, he saw Sally coming to meet him.

"Pete!" she greeted him with a cry of relief. "Are you all right? What happened?"

The concern in her voice sent a warm glow of happiness through Pete. He took her arm and led her out into the hall.

"Listen, I've got to telephone for

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