THE SHOT IN THE DARK.

By ARTHUR W. MARCHMONT,

Author of "By Right of Sword," "For Love of Crown," "The Case of Lady Broadstone," "In the Name of the People," &c., &c.

NEW READERS BECIN HERE:

Oliver Rentmain, a rising novelist, who tells the story, meets a girl on a Mediterranean trip and falls in love with her although is her baptismal name. On his return to London his friend Winford tells him that Hoffgang, a moneylender, is getting nasty about ford. the Peterson affair. Years before the friends had been present with Sir Richard Gourley, a member of the Government, when the latter's brother Manuel, had killed one, Peterson, in a gambling quarrel. Hoffgang had disposed of the body and had blackmailed Sir meet at his house. They agree reluctantly, conduct in the room. Hoffgang asks the friends to join in an oil swindle. They indignantly refuse, and after scared at the time." I replied a violent scene, the lights are switched off. A shot is fired in the darkness, and when the about it." lights are turned on Hoffgang is seen to be

CHAPTER III.

A FATAL BLUNDER.

The first few minutes after the discovery that Hoffgang was dead were the most terrible of my life. The horror of the tragedy, the spectacle of the dead man, the fearsome plight in which it involved us, the absorbing terror of the possible consequences, and the ing regret numbed and chilled me, so that I stood trembling like a man in a palsy, in capable for the time of thought or act.

in his chair, moaning and shuddering in utter despair.

hand once and lifted the dead man's arm, life." I objected.

wouldn't have happened," I said. "Why motive right enough."

a vacuous, bewildered look, like that of a What then?" things, or was bereft of his senses. Then someone come?" he chapped his hands to his head, and turned "Do you seriously mean that you don't chude that old story of Peterson's death. to look again at the dead body.

growled, in a deep whisper,

my face.

his denial.

selves; but my opinion is he took his own a time. Do you feel up to it?"

" No one's going to do any rousing till I'm and went to the billiard-room. out of here," he answered, turning fiercely But in the course of the game something excused, as I had called to see Gourley on on me. "No one knows we came here, and occurred which made it difficult to maintain a matter of business. no one need know when we leave. There's even a pretence of interest in it. He noticed close to his hand, and any fool can see that to a quiet corner of the smoking-room. he himself could have fired the shot that; "What's the matter?" he asked "You mean any more trouble, Rentmain." killed him. Get up, you fool." And he looked just now as if you'd seen a ghost." shook his brother again.

effort to regain some amount of self-control. about there not being anyone to know that He scrambled to his feet, and was shaking we had been at Hoffgang's. You forgot arm and was leading him to the window, appointment. Gourley had his letter with when I interriosed.

hold. You mustn't go,"

lay your last cent on that."

away safely," declared Gourley. "I daren't he could be such a fool." that revolver against myself."

any further discussion with characteristic House and see if he's there still." decision. He switched off the lights. We went to the telephone, and Winford pushed his brother out of the window, and rang up and asked for Gourley. If he was catching Winford by the arm, hustled him still in the House he was to telephone to the out as well, and left me to do as he had said Athenian Club. -face the thing alone.

plexity. If I remained alone, I was certain and the virtual impossibility of clearing my. thing at such a time. Do you mind going self in such damning circumstances flashed alone?" vividly across my mind. I could only hope to do so by impeaching my two companions, and blackening the case against them by night is a bit off. I shall ask for Gourley." revealing the fact that they had fled in four of the consequences.

the scale in favour of flight, although I fully bad." realised the madness of such a step. slipped out and pulled the window as close ing but a mare's nest after all." as possible after me, and walked quickly down Bromley-street. Some fifty yards from remember seeing Gourley fiddling with that the house Winford met me, and I found that letter. It's a thousand to one against his tensely. he had quite regained his mental balance. having had presence of mind enough to give

coming back for you," he said. "It's an awful blunder, Winford. Heaven! I shrugged my shoulders, having no sugonly knows what'll come of it," I replied festion to offer. dismally. 'If you had stayed, Gourley

wouldn't have dared to leave." stopped there alone. How could you have says he has written a similar letter to each cleared yourself? Many a man has been of us." hanged on much weaker evidence. It's a black business, anyhow; but we can't give

gether. You see that, don't you?" to sink than swim."

main. It's far the best thing," he said. "Where's your brother?" asked Winford. care. I wish to Heaven I hadn't sent for a few minutes before we had telephoned.

him, or had let him go there alone. I'd! have given twenty thousand pounds to have there," I said. escaped this horrible mess"; and he sighed ! with weary futility.

"Do you think he did it?" I asked. "I don't know what to think. He swears to the police and make a clean breast of he didn't. I was never in such a state of everything." anxiety in my life. I ought to be at the House, and I promised Miss Desbrough I'd deren't face a soul who knows me. I don't mugger rot for the future." know what to do. I can't get the horrible

despairingly. "You must pull yourself together," I said, pense than you can help." "The best thing you can do is to get down I jumped into a taxi, and as it was the of politics, about which she knew very. "I have no theory, Miss Desbrough," I a summary. to the House as soon as possible. If you first moment I had been alone since the little; and of literature, of which the knew replied. I had not. I had too fatal a knowshow up promptly, and don't give yourself tragedy my thoughts were of the gloomiest. less. She had considerable means of her ledge of the facts to need a theory. away, you'll be more than half-way toward I had little or no doubt in my mind that own, and would have a fortune when her "What do you say, Richard?" she neked establishing an alibi if trouble comes. And Hoffgang had been shot by Manuel, but aunt died; and, as Gourley had an next.

my thoughts for an instant. I believe I shall

hour," he said, as he drove off, "What are we going to do?" I asked Win- ours.

gang, and I tried to stop him. I called out suggested. to you to help me.

"I mean the second time."

"Did they go out a second time?" overwhelming despair and impotent, unavail- to rely on his hands. If he'd had a revolver, It was an obvious inference, therefore, that stairs. But I forced a smile, and a per-He collapsed entirely, and sat huddled up of his room when he went to put on his pose of revenge. overcoat, as he said."

recoiling with a gesture of horror as it fell "I don't mean that, It was very likely an from arrest. Meanwhile, we were left to the sound of Gourley's laboured breathing nerveless and flaccid on the table. Then he accident. You'll see that will be the verdict bear the brunt of the trouble. And a heavy as he put out his hand to steady himself turned to me wonderingly, as if for an ex- at the inquest. Everything points to it, load it would be if, as I greatly feared, the against the window frame. mind. His money affairs are sure to be incriminating letter fel! into the hands of the "Well, the man's head was withdrawn for "If you had helped when I called, this found in a devil of a mess; and there's the police.

"Possibly, if that was all. But it isn't, being credited, but the fatal blunder of flight "Possibly, if that was all. But it isn't being credited, but the fatal blunder of flight burly fellow, who was holding his comannouncements. "There are the police, panion by the arm, as if belping him."

Eva. Isn't it strange that one can always roused from a dream, and stared at me with room eame because of the row that was made. same time I took Winford's view—that our Gourley actually grouned at this, and at-

a gun along for fear that I might; and if I'd shrug of the shoulders, he continued: cleared up. I shan't be very long lamps to be erected in Emma-street and Holhad one I don't deny I might have used it. "Well, it doesn't make much difference to depressing conviction when the cab stopped, minute afterwards, the lights in the room now, I think," I said in a casual tone which land-street; two new pillar lamps in Nelson-If my word am't good enough, you can have us. Nobody knows we were ever in the and it will illustrate my condition of ner- went up again for perhaps another minute; my friend promptly resented. house, and if we keep our heads, the odds your tension that my thoughts turned from certainly not more, and then I saw a point That's a pretty cool way to take it, don't street; lamps to be removed as indicated in capital invested is again the highest on record. "Somebody did it," I answered, with a are that we shan't be dragged into it. Here that real trouble to a worry of the merest of light moving about the room." The facts were too strong for me to accept turning in and having a game of billiards? would think of my calling at so unconven-It might be useful to have some fellows able tional an hour. You can settle that among your three to prove that we have steady hands at such Both were unusually inquisitive women; able to mumble a reply. "And what hap For the benefit of the footman, I laughed, light to be removed and placed opposite the interest unpaid, amount to £4.653; to the save

can talk afterwards. We've got to do some- because of the strange change in him, and fire of their questioning. crossed to Gourley and shook him violently. failure to remember what had occurred dur- the servant told me he was there, I sent in "Never felt fitter in my life," was the to see him alone at once. The man returned "Not till we've roused the house," I said. reply, as we walked up the steps of the club with a request that I would go to the draw-

"It may be nothing, but it's given me the Gourley roused himself, and made a great jumps," I said. "You know what we said him; you remember he brought it out and for it." Gourley. We made the blunder once before He was in that big arm-chair at the time, low. The truth is that Winford and I have of funking things. We must rouse the house- and I remember that just as I turned to leave been worrying about it. We saw it in your the room. I noticed something white on the hands when we were over there-just before "To h- with your mustn't," said Manuel seat of the chair. Can that have been it?" the crisis came-and when I left the room I fiercely. "With all that's against me, do you Winford was scarcely less disconcerted than saw a paper lying on your chair, and we both

know. I tell you I'm going, and you can you're right, we're done, Rentmain," and you might have left it behind you in the he tossed up his hands with a gesture of moment of extreme excitement." "I shall go too, Rentmain, if I can get despair. "Yet you wouldn't think that even "You must both take me for an exceed-

in. But what can we do?" Manuel had looked out of the window, and "Do! Nothing, of course. You wouldn't can get away. If you want to stop, you can we must make sure, and must get at Gourley stop by yourself," he added to me, with an at once. We'd better go down to the House." I glanced at my watch, "It's over an hour exclaimed, turning deathly pale. I appealed then to Winford; but before he since we parted, and he said we should find

"If he isn't there, we'll go to Miss Vian's," This action plunged me in the deepest per. I said, as we waited for the reply. "I don't know them," replied my friend. him to be charged with having killed the Jew; "And we'd better not make too much of the

"Not a bit. I've known them both for a long time, but a casual call at ten o'clock at

"You can invent some political excuse to has happened which you must hear." get him away and bring him here. I shan't It was this last consideration which turned be easy until I know the truth, good or to put another question before Miss Vian

"It isn't. I've been thinking it over. I "I'm glad you've left the place. I was it a thought and shove it in his pocket. If it's true, what will you do!"

"The worst of it is," he continued, "that infernal letter gave all our names. Look "I don't understand myself, old man, I here," and he pulled out the dead man's seemed to lose my head altogether. But it letter and read it. "You see, he gives the would have been infinitely worse if you'd time of the meeting, names us all three, and

"It couldn't be more damning." I said. Gourley away. We must sink or swim to- least have had a straight story to tell, while ever, and accepted what I said-something now, we've made the thing infinitely blacker about polities. I remember-without hesi-"I can see that we're devilish more likely by trying to hush it up for all the world as tation, and pressed me to stay. "Now that if we were guilty. But at any rate, it must you are here, Mr. Rentmain, we couldn't At the end of the street Gourley was wait- be made clear that that was your doing. Not think of letting you hurry away. You opposite, staring at it as if fascinated by the ing. "I'm glad you've come away, Rent, that that will do much good," he added very disconsolately

We were called then to the telephone. "Gone. I don't know where, and don't Gourley was not at the house, having left it "I'll be off to Miss Vian's and catch him

"Look here, tell him from me that the only command. thing to do, if he was really fool enough to leave that letter in the room, is to go straight

"He'll be difficult to persuade." "Well, you can tell him that I shall do it, Winford that I had to stop for a time, but subsequent occurrences,

"I'll do my best with him, of course, but Eva Desborough delighted to be con- me taway from the vigil of dread, fear sight of poor Hoffgang's dead face out of I'm not hopeful." "Well, if you've any trouble, bring him about twenty-seven, wiry and lathe in house had a grim interest for me. go mad," he cried, flinging up his hands straight here, or send for me. And for figure, and decidedly plain in face, except "You'll admit you're interested now Mr. heaven's sake don't keep me longer in sus-

afterwards, go to Miss Vian's and see Miss there was no stronger evidence against him mordinate love of money, I had no doubt "I don't know anything about

Desbrough, and say that you were kept at the than against any of us. We had not seen a revolver in his possession; the darkness had After some hesitation on his part, we prevented either of us from seeing what took hustled him into a taxi. "If there's any place, and, look at it as I would, there was she refuses to divulge her surname. Marna trouble, I shall be at Miss Vian's in about an nothing but his motive and his fierce rage at the moment to distinguish his case from

Winford's suggestion-that Gourley him-"Nothing in particular. I've been in too self might have had a revolver, and used it didn't kill the man; but if I have to die for entertain for an instant. It was true that it, I shall have to. That's all. And I'm not he had been infinitely affected, almost unso keen about living," he said, with a com- manned indeed, after the man's death; but Richard ever since. He now asks them to posure which astounded me, in view of his that was just as likely to be the result of the shock on his feeble nerves as of guilt. Far "You seemed to be pretty considerably more likely indeed. That Winford had had else make him late," put in her aunt, who no more to do with it than I myself, I was was devoted to her niece, and always con-"Did It I don't remember anything certain, and thus the more I thought of it the clearer the issue was narrowed that it orchestra under her leadership. You remember the lights going out just was Manuel Gourley's doing, or sujeide "Aunt always takes your part, Richard, as that devil of a Manuel was going for Hoff- under some such conditions as Winford had, as we know. Well, Mr. Rentmain, I was

Then a sentence of Manuel's leapt into my "But he wasn't there when the light went thoughts. "I know more than you think," "Hang it, man, that was when Manuel shot he learn anything about Hoffgang out there bound to say that for once I was a little Miss Desbrough," I said, forcing a smile. be well if the churches would combine to do Mr. Townson: Where do you work?-At Oak the Jew. You must remember that, and that in Wyoming? Gourley couldn't write to him curious." somebody tried the door directly afterwards." about such matters, at any rate. When we "I was curious enough, too, now; for a He paused, and then shook his head, had been in his rooms he had not let a glance at Gourley's profile as he stared out

he'd have used it before. I remember thinksomeone else must have been writing to him You see, his house has a room like our ing that. In my opinion, it was either suicide about the affair, and someone who had dining-room, a sort of addition built on or Gourley had a weapon with him without written in a strain which had roused the what was possibly the garden at some our knowledge, and used it in a fit of panic. Westerner's rage sufficiently to induce him time. Remember that, because it is

But all this did not help our case. Manuel of getting out of the house. "I don't believe he has the pluck to fire had gone, and in all probability we should! "I won't forget it," I said, with more not see anything of him again. He was not truth than she conceived. Winford was differently affected. He "Then it was suicide. Hoffgang is sure likely to lose an hour in putting as great a "Well, I saw a man look out of the remained near the table, staring blankly at to have had a revolver by him, and when he distance as possible between him and the French window-you can see it clearly now the dead man as if unable to understand I w that Manuel meant going for him, he possible consequences of his act. I had been that the fog has lifted, but at the time it what had occurred, or to believe that the probably whipped it out and shot himself." in Wyoming and knew enough of the region clearly; and, of course, that adds to the Jew was really dead. He stretched out his "Hoffgang wasn't the man to take his own to be aware that there were places there in mystery, doesn't it?"

man who had suddenly lost his grip of, "You said that before, Rentmain. Did and telling everything we knew, just as it then, after a longer interval, a fourth man, know?" I asked, amazed by the apparent And then, for the first time in the last "n'm afraid that there's not much My words roused Manuel. He had been sincerity with which the question was asked. crowded hours, my thoughts flew back to material there Miss Desbrough," I managed telephone, and unwilling thought the councillors representing the far less affected by the scene than we three, "I was never more serious in my life." Marna and the purpose for my hurried to say calmly, although my voice was down leave my watch, I went downstairs at once, ward. The recommendations relating to each and he interpreted my words as an implied "Well, I can't understand it. Someone return beme, and I realised with bitter a tone. and he interpreted my words as at the rest and I was going chagrin that now indeed there was a barrier there's something in it. The four went off to open it when Manuel stopped me." between us which would prove insuperable. down Bromley-street and in less than a "I say, are you going to be much longer? I did not reply, but he read my opinion in "It's devilish odd," he said, and passed I could not ask her to be my wife. I could minute after they had gone-I don't This delay's getting on my nerves." his hand across his forehead, as if in an not even attempt to seek for her until this think it was more than half a Out of the tail of my eye I saw that the Wesley-street, China-street, top of Barlow-"I didn't, Mr. Rentmain. I durstn't bring effort to remember. Then, with a sigh and a grim business of Hoffgang's death was minute, in fact, but one doesn't know

my visit would set them agog with curiosity, pened then?" I asked. life. He knew the game was up. But we "Do you?" I asked, not a little concerned and I positively dreaded having to stand the "That's the provoking part of it. Aunt thing till we meet, old man."

ing-room; but I sent back word asking to be

"I hope not too. It's about that letter, which Hoffgang wrote you, making the

appointment for to-night. Have you it?" "Of course I have," he answered irritably and I breathed a fervent sigh of relief. so violently that Manuel took him by the about his having written to us all to fix the "You don't mean that you thought it necessary to come here at such a time and ask

think it wouldn't be put down to me! I I. "It would be just like him. My God! if frightened ourselves with the possibility that

ingly stupid person," he said, with a superior must hurry away." And I was shaking be found here after this. I'd sooner use, "Don't forget the half-crazy fright he was smile, as he put his hand in his pocket and took out some half-dozen letters. Then the smile died away, his confidence now opened it, "The coast's clear, and we care to go back and fetch it, I suppose? But failed, and he began to feel hurriedly and nervously in one pocket after another. "Great neavens! I haven't got it," he

could make any response, Manuel cut short him at Miss Vian's. We can 'phone to the asked, "You'll see the vitale importance of it to us all."

"It isn't there, I'm sure." "Your overcoat?" I suggested next. rushed out of the room and I followed. But it was not there, and I thought he would have dropped in his agitation and fear as he realised the truth and all that it meant to

and talk it over. Pull yourself together man, But she made no attempt to move. Here's Miss Vian coming," I said, as I heard excuse and come with me at once."

Infinitely perp exed by this, I had no time reached us, full of curiosity as to the cause

CHAPTER IV.

A FEARSOME VIGIL.

Overwhelmed by Gourley's fatal blunder, consequences to us, I could scarcely her niece's. summon sufficient self-possession to return Miss Vian's greeting and invent a plausible reason for my visit.

"If we'd faced the music, we should at fortunately, feeble-minded woman howknow that Eva is one of your greatest admirets; she positively devours your books; I really ean't let you go without seeing I was not less intensely interested. What

send him a message

then went up to the drawing-room. for a pair of large dark eyes, which she Rentmain?" said Eva Desbrough once, sidered great effect. She effected a study you think it means?"

that this had much to do with his inten- course." tion to marry her. He wished to have a wealthy wife, and she blunt and almost bearish. to marry a title of some sort and a member the Cabinet, and she would reign as a as it distracted the girl's attention from ever lead anybody was highly improbable. | another doctor, I expect.

"Eva was saying just before you came, Rentmain, that she had a plot for you," said Gourley, who appeared to believe in regular doctor, I'm glad Dr. Hammond was being built nearly forty years ago, and his her intellectual claims. "Indeed! I'm always glad of suggestions," I replied, little thinking what the hand's like ice and trembling so. Don't you mother church of Congregationalism in Acc

which I appreciatel at its real worth

"plot" was to be. "You're accustomed to unravel mysteries, Mr. Rentmain, and this is a mystery, I am patiently. "I'm all right, Eva," he replied ticed representatives from their church in sure. You know that Richard has behaved shortly. many tight corners to be scared now. I in the instant of excitement-I could not abominably to-night," and she turned shook her head at him. "He promised to exclaimed then, holding his hand and star- the Whalley-road church. He believed the be here hours and hours ago-I really don't ing down at his cuff. "Your cuff is all blood drawing together of the Christian churches think I ought to forgive him, although he stained."

declared he was kept at the House for an important Government division. "I'm sure he wouldn't have let anything tent to play any instrument in the

waiting for him at this window, and plaguing myself with all sorts of reasons for his me." eaid her aunt, returning to her seat community or anybody. He was not speaking ground. He assisted him to his feet, and absence—that's the worst of having a vivid by the other window. imagination, you know-when I saw somehe had said to Hoffgang, adding that he had thing at the house opposite which set me seen. It's quite as dark as blood, I'm sure, come over so ely to have the interview with wondering. A rather peculiar person lives persisted the girl. him. What could that mean? How could there, you know; a Mr. Hoffgang; and I'm

"Well, I don't; and what's more, I don't word drop to suggest that he had had any of the window told me that this had to do believe it was Manuel's doing. He was going communication at all with his brother. | with the news he had referred to down-

Gourley was even more overcome than I. You remember he was a deuce of a time out to make the long journey for the special pur- essential to the plot that there should be a separate, and, in a way, a secret means

which even a murderer could remain safe "Considedably." I agreed, very uneasy at

an instant, and then the light was ex-I tried to balance the chances of our story tinguished and some one came out, followed by two others-one of them was a big had happened. And "everything" must in- who closed the window carefully behind they've gone in without asking a question."

it was only with a great effort that I was better?" Elsie called me, and I had to hurry away. "I suppose you think that's mighty funny. Hurstead, Back-lane, Hill-street, Worsley-street, thing," and after a glance at Winford, he the significant reason he had given for his I asked for Gourley, therefore, and when I don't. I want to know now," was the Grange-lane, Henry-street, and in Manchesterdarkness and the fog thicker than ever, langrily stoken reply-"Don't sit whining there. We must clear ing the last few minutes in Hoffgang's house. a card with a scribbled message that I wished You know it was very thick until it cleared "There are other things besides invitaaway altogether. Now, what do you make of Lions that are of importance."

In order to get time to regain my self- man-those infernal things in which the street, Pansy-street, and Nutter-road; two new command, I affected to think over what she meaning is wrapped up in all the other pillar lamps in Marlborough-street and Lime-He came then, and I could see that he was had said. I was consumedly alarmed, but I words. the weapon the man killed himself with, it and, as soon as the game was over, we went suffering from the shock of the night's in view of Gourley's overwhelming agitaevents, "I hope to heaven your visit doesn't tion, it was vital that I should keep my tone, as he grasped my meaning. Then,

"It is an interesting problem," I replied, after a pause, speaking very deliberately, his concern at this. "Very well, I'll wait would depend upon two considerationswhat occurred afterwards, and whether pour ceiver and returned to the drawing-room. could identify the four men you saw?" "That's just where the fog comes in, Mr. Rentmain," said Eva Desbrough as Rentmain. They were little more than four entered. "This thing can't be dealt in this way, was fiddling with it while we were talking. "Will you show it to me like a good fe'- shadowy blurs. You know what people look into the house, and there's been

> I breathed a fervent sigh of relief at hear- room which I saw the men Yes, I undenstand, of course. I know what you mean. Weil, I shall keep the story in mind; indeed, I'm not likely to forget it, after the vivid way in which you have described it. You must let me know what comes of it. And now think, if you and Miss Vian will excuse me l

hands with the two ladies when Gourley broke in. "Wait," he exclaimed, in a hoarse tone, which made us all turn to him at the window. "Something is happening over there now," he added, in a less agitated gushed. "Did you hear that, aunt."

"Yes see," cried Miss Desbrough excitedly "Can you have left it at the house?" I "The lights have gone up again. Oh, you must wait, Mr. Rentmain, as Richard says. I'm sure something's the matter, and some horrible discovery is about to be made, He How lucky that you are here, isn't it You'll be able to study the scene at first-

"Eva, my dear, Mr. Rentmain is scarcely ikely to do anything so morbid as that, said her aunt, "You speak as if it was some sort of amusement. I think we had have something brought here. Mr. Rent- extra lamp in Spring Hill-road, to be removed "You'd better come with me to Winford all better come away from the window." main, would you mind ringing the bell?" to the opposite side of the road, and a new "I was only excited, aunt. No one could the swish of a skirt on the stairs. "Make an help feeling that. Of course, I'm awfully sorry if anything really horrible has wouldn't miss a thing that's going on

"No, no. You must stop here. Something occurred, but we've had no hand in it, and now for the world. See," she cried, pointing opposite; "the lights are going up all over the house Ah, and there's a man without a hat, just left the house, running. "Don't worry yet about it. It may be noth- of my visit and Gourley's too obvious panic. He's going for the nearest doctor, you may much as she pleased, irrespective of Miss power electric lamps. What could possibly have occurred there be sure." She jumped up and ran to one Vian's wishes cornected with the night's tragedy? The of the front windows. "Yes, he's at Dr. question both mystified and a armed me in. Hammond's door. I do hope he's in; he'll ! tell us everything. He's our doctor, you we hear it in the usual way. know, Mr. Rentmain," she explained, as

"As you will insist upon staying to watch, I'll go to the other window," declared Miss Vian. "Dr. Hammond has just come out, and is returning with the footman," she announced, in a tone which plainty showed and the distracting thoughts of the possible that her interest was to the full as keen as

In this way the two women chattered on noteing every incident, and reporting is and discussing in the fullest detail its probable or possible significance, and turning now She was an extremely kind-hearted and, and again to appeal to either Gourley or nivelf for our opinion. What Gourley's real feelings were I can-

not say, but that he was suffering keenly was clear from his haggand looks and grim curt replies to the questions put to him. He could not tear his eyes from the house problem of what was passing there, and the peril to him with which it might be

had occurred? How had the dead man been "Yes, come up," put in Gourley, who was discovered? Who had been the first to find struggling hard to recover his self- him? What had caused the long delay in William Ramsay's praises of Chinese orthothe discovery! Had the presumption of graphy as compared with English. One of "I shall be delighted, Miss Vian, if you suicide been accepted? These and a hun- the earliest acts of the Chinese Republic was will excuse so unconventional a visit, dred other kindred question; occurred to to train men to report Parliamentary prowill excuse so unconventional a visit, dred other kindred question; occurred to to train men to report Parliamentary pro-but I promised to get back to a friend at me as I sat watching, the picture of the ceedings. A special system of shorthand was Secretary: the club. May I use your telephone and room as we had left it vividly impressed on evolved to overcome the perversities of Chimy mind, and forming the scene which my nese script, and altogether £4,000 was spent on "Why, of course you may, "So I telephoned imagination filled in with the details of the the establishment. At the opening of the new see her this evening. But I feel that I if he doesn't. We'll have no more hugger would get away as soon as possible, and No inducement that could have been presumed to be capable of taking down

sidered a very earnest person. She was some expectancy. The very bricks of the

"Well, you needn't bite my head off for There was not much love between them. asking," she retorted, for his tone had been "There's a carriage driven up to the of the House. I think she had visions front door," announced Miss Vian at that

leader of the party. That Gourley would Gourley's unfortunate manner, Her reception of me was best intense "Then it must be something very serious than usual, although she murmured some- said her nicce. "You see I was right, Mi thing about my "positively divine book"- Rentmain; and there will be a plot in it." J. T. Walmsley, chairman of the Accrington her phrase for what was nothing but a "It certainly begins to look very serious," Liberal Club, and himself an old Sunday novel of adventure and how she had I agreed. It did, in every sense of the school teacher. Mr. A. Isherwood, pastor, pre-"devoured" it at a single sitting; all of word; and my imagination went on to picture sided, and introduced Mr. Walmsley as a sym-

the actions of the new arrival. "That must be Dr. Bascombe," said Eva. after a pause. "I know that he's their Mr. Walmsley said he recalled the chapel there first. Why, Richard, how cold you associations with it. He was there that night are," she exclaimed suddenly.

"Don't worry "Why, Richard, whatever's that?"

I started and caught my breath as I looked round and saw the smear of blood at which uplifting of the people in their midst. Mr she was staring. "What's that! Blood!" cried Miss Vian avoidance of "controversial subject," and said rising and coming to us "Don't be so foolish, Eva," said Gourley positively trembling with either anger or panic, "It's-it's nothing of the sort. It's temperance was that he spoke the previous on Saturday afternoon he was on point duty red ink. I got it to-night at the House.' "My dear child, you actually frightened

"Your thoughts are running on tragedy,

"That accounts for such a mistake." made a deep impression on me so that in lago, and dwelt on the advantages of gatherthat Gourley might have committed the act members of the church together. which had plunged us all into this mael. Mr. G. W. Belsey, in proposing a vote of P.C. Clements said shortly after eight o'clock

minutest details of what had occurred after where they stood. the Jew's death, and failed to remember | Mr. R. T. Bloomer seconded, and the vote was money for a night's lodgings. Prisoner said that Gourley had even been near the table heartily accorded. very close to Hoffgang, at the moment a Fog." the shot was fired which killed him? The suggestion was obvious. The smear was on the right hand-the hand which would hold the revolver. The death-wound had shown that the shot was fired from a wearon held very close to the head, for I had seen the marks of the powder round it. It was on the right temple moreover, the side of the head which would be turned towards Gourley's

was broken by another of Miss Vian's rington Town Council a month ago. It was announcements. "There are the police, then stated the matter was receiving atten- last. only hope lay in going straight to the police tempted to cover it with a cough. "And There are two men at the front door now, have held a number of meetings for the purtalking he might get on. He would have to and I'm sure they're detectives. that someone was asking for me on the Spring Hill Wards, and in each case were ac- came out.

> gueseing that it was Winford. "That you Rentmain!" came in his voice. Council yesterday, are as follow :-"Yes. Winford, isn't it?" servant was hanging about with the evident street, and top of Layland-street; new pillar

gesture he could interpret as he pleased, we are at the Club. What do you say to triviality-what Miss Vian and her niece I child of dismay as I "It's adopted purposely, and, of course, I mellen-street. pected and literally terrifying news, and "Well, what's happened? Has he got that

> it! Isn't there a plot in it! The moment "I'm hanged if I understand you," he street. heard you had called. I resolved to tell it rapped back, only he put it more strongly. "But surely you know what a charade is, One new pillar lamp to be fixed in Entwiste-

"Oh," he exclaimed in a very different head and conceal the effect which the news after a pause: "Is it very black, then?"

I could hear his catch of the breath "But from the point of view of a plot, much on, of course," he replied, his voice down a tone, and unsteady; and I hung up the re-"You haven't missed very much, "Some more people have gone judging by the shadows on the blinds. hope that telephone call doesn't mean that certainly you will have to go yet. I'm getting more and more excited every minute."

here; and I have put off the appointment, I answered in a casual tone,

"I trust I should always be glad to be Hyndburn-road to the Electricity Works to where you are. Miss Desbrough. "Oh, what a darling of a speech!" "Indeed I did."

"I didn't think you could condescend to site side. such flattery of me. Mr. Rentmain. Poor Richard couldn't have said such a awfully ill, Richard, and won't admit it.' "No, dear, I'm not ill; but I've had a of Buxton-street, Willows-lane, opposite No. 61 will let us break her rule at such a time and lamp to be fixed opposite to the back street; anything," said Gourley,

to send him to try and find out what has one fixed on the opposite side of the street; happened opposite. "I think you had better not," said her in Willows-lane, Charter-street, Spring-street,

"But you're just as anxious as I am to know, aunt," replied Eva, who did very "I am naturally a little curious, but I think it would be far better to wait until

"Auntie, dear, what possible harm can

Anyhow, we want the brandy. Please ring, I had crossed to the bell and stood near it in some hesitation what to do. "Wait a moment, please, Mr. Rentmain, Eva, my dear, I don't mind putting a question to Brady but I don't wish you to send

conceptions might---She stopped abruptly as the door opened. that night of bewildering surprises. Instead of the sleek, deferential butler, a making the final score, Darwen 4, Accrington woman, cloaked and hooded, rushed into the | 2. Elliott and Haworth scored for Accrington.

As she rushed across to Eva Desbrough, er hood fell back and I recognised her. It was Marna. (To be continued next Saturday.)

VERBATIM REPORT.

Shorthand writers will not agree with Sir Parliament 20 reporters were present and all offered to me would have sufficed to drag speeches verbatim. Four of these repre he can find no sufficient ground to justify him, sented newspapers, and the others were charged with the task of supplying an official His Majesty to interfere in this case.-Yours, report. Their notes when transcribed were unintelligible. After a week's trial both the Government and the press decided to abandon was accustomed to use with what she con was sure you would be. Do tell me what any hope of obtaining a verbatim report of the debates, and to content themselves with

> if you have genius, industry will improve it; if you have none, industry will supply its place.-Sir Joshua Reynolds.

A WINTER "GARDEN PARTY."

of a salon when her husband would be in moment; and the inter-position was timely Mr. J. T. Walmsley and Drink.

The last of the series of winter garden parties in the Whalley-road Congregational school was opened on Saturday evening by Mr. pathiser with the great Sunday school move-

"Your as a rather subordinate supporter of the rington, and he was very pleased to think that Gourley tried to drag his hand away im- the old feeling was dying away. He had no-Whalley-road present at Oak-street, and there she had been representatives from Oak-street at would be for the good of the community. They were all working together with one object, the Walmsley made an allusion to Mr. Isherwood's he spoke on that subject last week. He was not there that night to go further into the with being drunk and riotous. matter. All he would say with regard to P.C. Dewhurst said at ten minutes past five Saturday the opinions of J. T. Walmsley. He at the junction of Blackburn-road and Church was not speaking as the representative of any street, when he saw the prisoner fall to the in a political or party sense. His tectotal prisoner walked towards Dutton-street and "Well, it's the funniest red ink I've ever principles he liked the word "teetotal" bet- stopped, causing a crowd to assemble. He was ter than temperance were very dear to him. drunk, shouting, and used filthy language. He looked upon drink as one of the greatest He refused to go away and was locked up. curses of this country, and he thought it would Prisoner said he had got a drop too much what they could to stamp it out. In closing. Vale Mill. Then Gourley's eyes and mine met, and Mr. Walmsley referred to pleasant memories the suspense and agony I read in them of Mr. J. H. Whittaker and others many years voluntarily I recalled Winford's suggestion ings of that nature in bringing workers and

thanks to Mr. Walmsley, said one admired men I searched my memory for even the of Mr. Walmsley's type. It was well to know several shops in the Post Office Arcade, and

on which the dead man lay. The smear of Entertainment was afterwards provided by wanted money for his lodgings and for someblood must therefore have been cause dur- Mrs. A. Wilson, of Clayton-le-Moors, elecution-thing to eat, and that was why he went into ing the darkness which had enveloped the ist; Miss Fanny Stott and Miss Lilian Keen. the shops, adding, "I don't care if you lock mystery of the deed. But how ! The only soloists; and the dramatic society, who pre- me up, I am at home in Preston Gaol." Among inference was that Gourley must have been sented the sketch, "Who's Who," or "All in other things in prisoner's pockets were two

STREET LIGHTING IN ACCRINGTON.

Improvements Recommended.

Many complaints of the lighting of the This grimly suggestive train of thought borough were made at the meeting of the Acc- The Chief Constable said prisoner was contion. Since then the Lighting Sub-Committee Yes, poses of a thorough inspection of the lighting to to Preston Gaol for seven days, and that of the wards. They have inspected West, would give him time to think about putting At that moment a servant entered to say South, North, Central, Higher Antley, and his good resolutions into practice when he ward, which were submitted to the Town WEST WARD.

Double burners to be fixed in Lonsdale-street,

One extra lamp to be fixed at the tramway terminus at Baxenden, the existing electric as if at a joke. "Oh, you must leave every- steps leading to the dwellings in that district; new pillar lamps to be placed at Bridge Houses. road, to illuminate the footpath known as loan capital. The present number of members

> NORTH WARD. HIGHER ANTLEY WARD.

Existing lamps to be removed as indicated in Moorhouse-street, Marsden-street, and Lydis street; four additional electric lamps at Bedlam: two new lamps to be fixed and two removed in Garbett-street; two lamps to be removed and one new lamp fixed in Richmond Hill-street; one lamp to be removed, and one new lamp fixed in Fountain-street; double lights to be fixed in existing lamps in Hopestreet and Abraham-street; all lamps to be fitted with double burners in Higher Antleystreet and Victoria-street; bracket lamp and cillar lamp to be fixed in Riley-street; one new

street.

lamp to be fixed in Lydia-street. CENTRAL WARD.

Double burners to be fixed in existing lamps in Milnshaw-lane, Hyndburn-road, Church "No; it was from the friend I was to have street and St. James'-street; bracket lamps to met at the club. He knew I was coming be fixed in Pleck-road, Cunliffe-street, and Ellison's Tenement on the Hippodrome building one new pillar lamp in Mason-street, Argle- Church and Triumph Lodge running up. The "That's good. Now, confess you're glad street, leading to mill yard, Argyle-street, opyou stopped, and that you really are in posite back entrance to Electricity Works: the very open. existing standard in the road leading from have a bracket arm attached to carry an electric lamp: lamp at entrance to tank yard to have double incandescent lights fixed; lamp in O. Beneon Frederick-street to be removed to the oppo-

SPRING HILL WARD. One new pillar lamp to be fixed in Willowsthing could you? I believe you're feeling lane, opposite back Corporation-street. Claretstreet, opposite the lower block of houses, top most trying night," he answered, with a top of Fife-street, top of Exchange-street. Fairfeeble attempt to rally under her scrutiny. | field-street (if there is a gas main); existing "I do wish you'd have something-some lamp in Crossland-street to be removed to the brandy, or something. I'm sure Aunt Elsie top of the underground passage, and one extra "No, don't make a fuss, Eva. I don't need pillar lamp fixed about the middle of the bottom row of houses; existing lamp in Richmond-"But I want Brady in any event. I mean street to be removed lower down, and a new double burners to be fixed in all existing lamps aunt. "I-I don't like the idea of such a and at the bottom of Stephenson-street East.

MAIN ROAD LIGHTING All main roads to be lighted with 200 candle

HOCKEY.

DARWEN CORINTHIANS. | the

This match took place on the Darwen cricket field on Saturday, Darwen coming out victors by four goals to two, after a pleasant game. Accrington had one player short, and were also without the good services of their centre him out," said Miss Vian. "All sorts of mis- half, F. Sagar. The ground was in very heavy condition and the players found it difficult to keep on their feet. At the interval the score Then came the crowning amazement of stood: Darwen 3, Accrington 0. In the second half Darwen scored one and Accrington two, room in a condition of profound agitation Cunliffe played a good game, his tackling being sure and his clearing sound. A. Entwistle also played well. After the match an enjoyable social evening was spent at "The Kirk" in Sunnyhurst Woods. The Accrington team comprised the following :- Goal Miss F. Entwistle; full backs: F. Walsh and H. Cunliffe; half backs: Miss A. Elliott (left), F. Rawcliffe (centre half), Miss G. Horrocks (right); forwards: A. Watt (left), E. H. Haworth (centre), Miss Entwistle and R. Elliott (right).

"DR. NIKOLA'S" CONVICTION.

Mr. J. R. Ormerod, of Liverpool, has re-

Home Office, Whitehall, 27th December, Sir,-The Secretary of State having carefully considered your application of the 19th instant for the release of Thomas William Stewart, I E. am directed to express to you his regret that T. consistently with his public duty, in advising w E. BLACKWELL.

Mr. Arno Schmidt, secretary of the International Cotton Federation, has delivered an address in India on the possibilities in that country in the cultivation of cotton. He urged the Government and the planters, and, among other reforms, advocated licensing of the ginning factories, in order to secure better man-

"Builds Bonnie Babies"

happy, to sleep peacefully and grow into a sturdy kiddie WRITE for FREE TRIAL TIN and The GLAXO BABY BOOK.

CLAXO, 45h, Kings-rd., St. Paneras, N.W.

ACCRINGTON POLICE COURT.

Yesterday. Before Messrs. J. Townson, B. Bury, and

R. Walker. FELL IN THE STREET. Henry Corbridge, Newark-street, was charged

Fined 2s. 6d. and costs. "AT HOME IN PRESTON GAOL"

Wm. Lord, of no fixed abode, was charged with begging. he went up to a gentleman and asked him for he had been going about all the week, and

insurance cards. Prisoner said friends had given him drink instead of money, and it being Christmas he cot drunk. He did not know what he said because he was drunk. He was a mason and belonged to Todmorden. If they would let him off he would get work.

The Magistrates' Clerk said the Insurance cards showed that he had worked very little Prisoner said he had been in the Infirmary

victed for begging in 1909 and in November Referring to prisoner's volubility, Mr. Towncon said if he was as good at working as at

CLAYTON CO-OP.

The quarterly report of the Clayton-le-Moors Co-operative Society, issued this week-

The Quarterly Report.

end, states that the Society still continues to square; new bracket lamps in Newark. make headway, and the trade done and the Porter-street, Monk-street, Park-road, and Tre- The total cash sales amounted to £18,335 as against £17,697 for the corresponding quarter of the previous year, thus showing an increase of £638. The additions made to share capital during the quarter, including the dividend and ings bank, £837; and to the loan acount, £2,440. The share capital now amounts to £52,620; the savings banks, £2;815; and the loss account to £31,374, making a total of £86,810 share and lamps in Clement-street and Robert Nuttall- a total of £16,016, and the total amount paid for checks purchased during the quarter was £325, representing £2,367 in checks. A quar-

BILLIARDS.

terly dividend or 3s, in the £ is recommended

Accrington and District Semi-Billiard League.

LEAGUE TABLE. St. James' Sacred Heart Christ Church Triumph Lodge Clayton Parish Ch. ... 10 St. Andrew's Postmen's Club

St Anne's Oak-street The League table midway in the season to n a very interesting stage. St. James' and Sacred Heart are on level points with Christ position regarding the championship is still

St. Peter's ..

St. Augustine's

ST. ANDREW'S v. POSTMEN'S CLUB 2 H. Bullock 100 G. Wilson 100 H. Crawshaw 97 P. Molyneaux Gumm 68 W. Holden . Broadley 100 G. Watson 100 W. Hartley 100 W. Furness E. Haworth This match caused a great amount of in-

ST. PETER'S v. SACRED HEART. J. Crawehaw Deverenx Ainsworth Haworth 92 J. Garner W. Haworth 100 H. Holland 93 H. Ainsworth 100 J. Stanton W. Smith

appearance against his old club, the Postmen,

Benson, the Postmen's idol by 98.

H. Bullock played a great game, beating O.

D. Waddington failed to put in an

Total St. Peter's put up a valiant fight against Sacred Heart, who had to strive hard to beat Played at Christ Church on December 29th. 28 J. W. Heys I. Duckworth H. Whittaker Hacking 66 H. Hartley 100 Rev. Merrefield ... 89

Clayton Church Institute only sent six men

to Churst Church. OAK STREET V. ST. ANNE'S Played at Oak-street on December 30th. Rol. Banks H. Banks 100 G. 100

Total ST. JAMES' v. ST. AUGUSTNE'S. Played at St James' on December 29th

100 L. Nowell Ashworth 100 E. Cheetham Liggins 100. Parkinson Handicab Total

that the work would be remunerative both to Printed and Published by ROBERT SHAW CROSSLEY for the "Accrington Observer and Times," Limited. Offices: Accrington, Edgarstreet; Haslingden, 130, Blackburn-road; London, 92, Fleet-street.