



BY WILL P. HOOPER.

I MUST make a report—it will be short—but I am loaded, and must speak. I shall be upheld by the men anyway, for, though they often speak of me as a “beautiful bore,” still they know I’m straight as a gun-barrel. The ladies do not take much stock in me, but they often admire my stock. My sight is keen—I seldom miss the mark. And if this report, of how I made two lives happy, is not correct, I’m ready to be discharged.

*The Report of a Gun.*

I was standing in a corner, trying to make an impression on a lawn tennis racket, as I weigh twenty-eight pounds, and had been placed directly on the racket. I felt that I had all *but* succeeded, when Arabella stepped into the hall and attempted to remove the racket from my marked attentions. George followed, and, in assisting to move me, his hand touched Arabella’s.

I knew by the quick way she removed her hand that she was on the war-path.

Then he said something in a low voice, filled with emotion and cigarette smoke.

But she simply played with the racket, turned away her head, tampered with a



left-handed dimple in her flushed cheek, and said nothing.

After a moment's hesitation, he snatched me up, and, throwing me over his shoulder, strode forth.

But he could not resist looking back—it was very evident that she had turned his head.

He actually looked around six times

while crossing the lawn. She was equally industrious in looking after him; in fact, it was six of one and half a dozen of the other. But as luck would have it, neither

caught the other in looking. So they both concluded that the other one was roaring mad, and that their young lives, so full of hope, taffy, and love, in the morning, were now forever blasted.

There she stood, her bright striped lawn tennis dress, her new Florentine bang, her left-handed dimple, and her look of general sweetness and utility,

making a picture bang away at some impossible shot, and which—but here's the picture:—

while he dragged his crushed remains towards the woods, wondering if he could live till he died, or if his bruised heart would compel him to resort to the graceful noose and the toy pistol.

And she, with tears in her fists and her eyes doubled up, rushed to her room, and—in the depth of her unutterable despair, threw herself upon a box of chocolate caramels.

Our shooting that day was disgraceful. I never was so misdirected in all my ex-



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then would be apparently oblivious of birds, "taking a flyer" right within my sight and range. Oh, it was more than powder and shot could bear, and at last, when he was taking one of his absent-minded aims, I *kicked*—well, that seemed to completely *upset* him. However, he



continued to drag his big hunting-boots, his empty game-bag, and his look of abject misery, through bush and field, utterly

laughed, and hope continued to revive, strengthen and grow.

Near the house on his way home, at an abrupt turn in the river, a swaying mass in the swift current suddenly caught his eye.

One glance was enough—that bright striped lawn tennis dress seemed to burn itself into his eyes, as it was swept under the rushing waters. Without one word of apology he dropped me, and with one leap threw himself into the stream, the



lost to everything except his, heart-breaking sorrow—and his increasing thirst.

Suddenly he came upon a little road-side inn, and he smiled; hope revived—he smiled again; he smiled till he almost

folded the robe were already in his grasp, when his big long-legged boots, being full of water—they, in a quiet unostentatious way, dragged him towards the bottom of the river.

Fortunately I was able to save his life, for when I was dropped I made a report which brought help to the scene.

A feminine scream filled the air—a maiden rushed forward—in one dimpled fist she carried a clothes pole, and George

not his life—but his love, and I well remember her remark that she'd had many a good racket, but that I was by far the best. Since then I've been her constant companion. Every day, when George is not off with that horrid gun, we spend hours over lawn tennis.



was fished out. Half conscious of tender arms about him, of warm hands chafing his, of a gentle voice, broken with emotion, calling for help—half conscious of all this, and with a dim idea that he had rescued his beloved Arabella from a watery grave, he was contented to drop his weary head on her dimpled shoulder and murmur her name.



When she changes her gown I am decorated with a big ribbon to harmonize with her toilet.

While Arabella was drowning her grief in the chocolate caramels, I saw from the window where I had been placed a cloud of dust, preceded by a black speck, way down the avenue.

I knew without a second's hesitation, after a few moments' observation, that it



#### *Revelations of a Racket.*

People who are judges always rave over my shape and general style. I'm from the finest stock—"the Franklin"—and naturally rather extravagant in my get up.

George, in seeking a beautiful present for Arabella, naturally selected me, and I have proved my appreciation by saving—



was a bicycle rider. I also suspected that he was a novice in the art. What convinced me of this was his quick impulsive way of dismounting, and rubbing himself around in the road, and then taking the wheel on top of himself and tying his legs in knots among the spokes.

As he came up the graveled driveway, our little pet dog rushed out to enjoy the sport, and the rider immediately got right off the wheel and spread himself all around, entirely covering the dog, and considerable of the avenue, and, as usual, the wheel climbed up his spinal column.



The dog was the first to recover, and after collecting a few samples of the rider's clothes, he withdrew. He had met Arabella on the America, and several times on the Continent, and knowing the interest American girls showed in out-door sports, he thought his appearance on a bicycle would product an impression—and it did, particularly on the smoothly-graveled surface of the avenue.

As soon as Arabella received his card, she stepped out of the lovely lawn tennis dress, and (we may as well mention right here) the maid hung it on a line out-doors to have the wrinkles blown out by the wind, and later, a sudden gust carried it into the stream.

Even the chocolates were ignored while Arabella went through a series of contortions, arraying herself in several tight-sleeved gowns, before being able to decide in which she could most successfully over-

whelm her visitor. She comforted herself with the knowledge that Nature had done so much for her that it would be impossible for her to look otherwise than lovely—even though disguised, distorted, and disfigured by the latest fashions.

The stranger—who had greatly added to his appearance by his intimate relations with the rough road, the green grass, and the pointed politeness of the dog—produced an effect which caused Arabella to conceal a choice assortment of large smiles for future reference.

Notwithstanding her tight gown, she could not resist lawn tennis, in which the visitor distinguished himself by his pronounced ability to show off his bad playing,



A sudden breeze gave an excuse to abandon the game, and they wandered forth.

It was the hour when the daily conflict is in progress between the mellow twilight

and the golden rays of the setting sun, and the mellow twilight was apparently getting the bulge on the golden rays, when—as they gloamed along—the gentle evening zephyr wafted towards them the report of a gun and a few disconnected shrieks. Hastening forward, their eyes were soon greeted by a charming picture.



There was George, reclining in graceful ease on the green sward, his head pillowed on a dusky shoulder, and one arm thrown caressingly about a bronze neck. The gloaming was not so intense but that it was plainly discernible that the neck and shoulder thus ornamented belonged to Arabella's



colored maid. But, on the other hand, the gloaming carefully concealed the fact that George's clothes were dripping with water, and his eyes closed in a faint.

On the impulse of the moment, without stopping to hesitate, Arabella emitted

thirteen distinct shrieks, and then, recovering her self-possession, she made three separate attempt to faint—failing in which, she allowed herself to be led away, and her shell-like ear filled with the plaintive love-story of the visitor, whose lovely accent, gained by a carefully neglected early education, added an almost irresistible charm to the chestnut, and a reluctant "yes" was quivering between her ruby teeth and pearl-like lips, when her foot touched an object she at once recognized, and she quickly picked up the neglected tennis racket and with it a flood of tender recollections of the giver; so, while the interloping He was elocuting about their future happiness together, she was thinking of her past happiness with George; and while he was enthusing over his castle in Wales, she was dreaming over castles in Spain.

At this moment the maid came rushing after them, partly conscious of the sensation she had been instrumental in creating—and her dripping garments snapping in the evening breeze, she gave a mixed, confused, incoherent account of saving George, and the story was so incoherent, confused, and mixed, that Arabella gained the impression that George was a noble hero, and had saved her faithful colored maid from the raging torrent. And in her impulsive way, Arabella flew back and fell on George's neck several times. And he had just sense enough left to come to



himself gradually, and not until she had so thoroughly aired her sentiments, that all that was left for him to do was to reciprocate—which he did—emphasizing it by a damp but apparently enjoyable embrace. And they seem perfectly unconscious that they owe their happiness to the gun, whose report summoned the aid which saved his life, and to the tennis racket who brought back the tender recollections which saved his love.