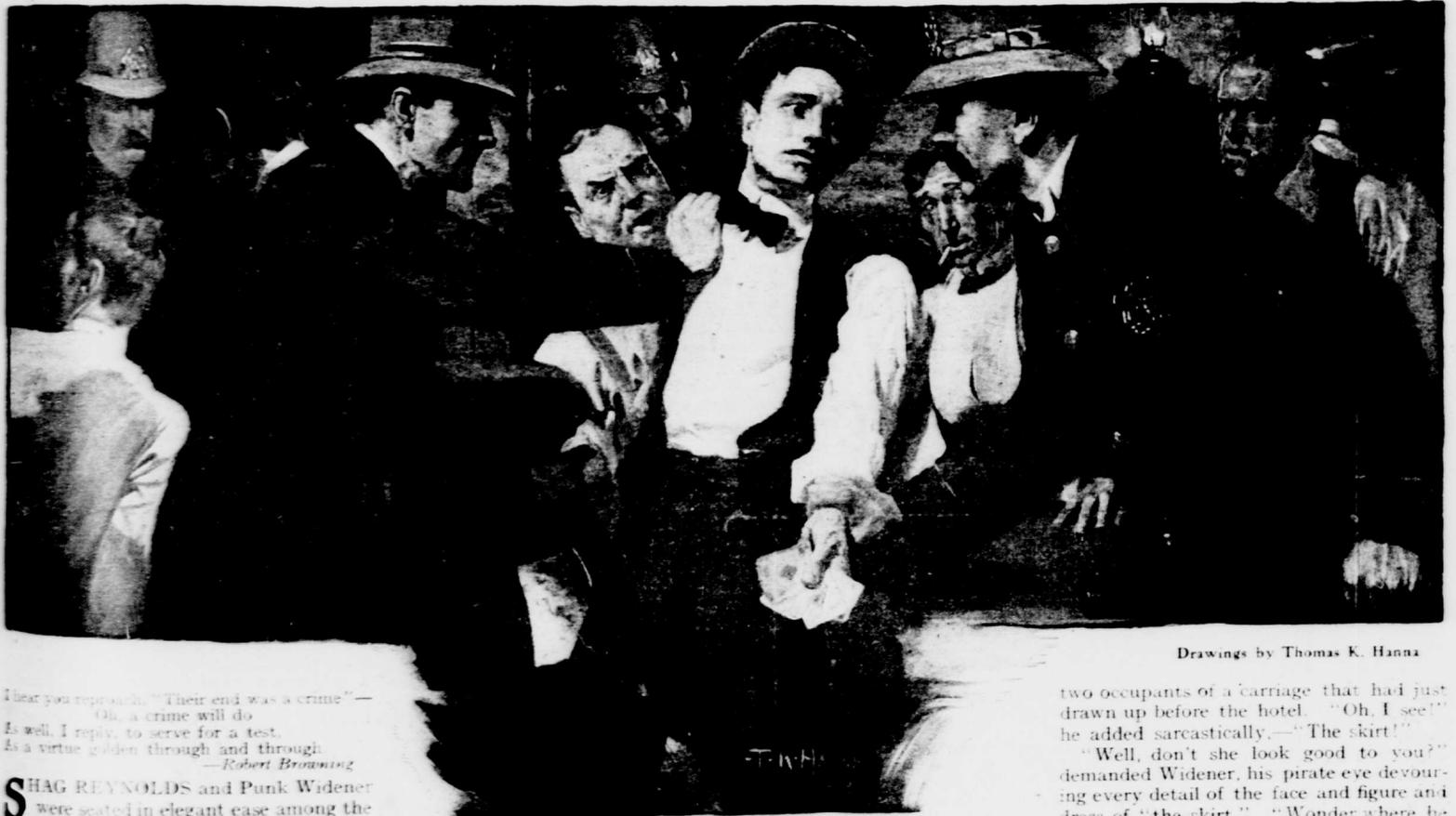


# WHEN THE LID WAS ON

By DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS



Drawings by Thomas K. Hanna

"I hear you represent." "Their end was a crime"—  
"Oh, a crime will do  
As well, I reply, to serve for a test.  
As a virtue golden through and through  
—Robert Browning

**S**HAG REYNOLDS and Punk Widener were seated in elegant ease among the elegant loungers on the vast front veranda of the United States hotel. With lusher brows drawn down, with keen blue eyes sullen, Shag gnawed his cropped grizzled mustache and watched Saratoga's glittering panorama of leisure and luxury. He suggested a fine old lion crouched at the bars and gleaming at sight-seers with an expression that said, "If I could get at you!" Shag had never forgotten, nor ceased to regret bitterly, that only an unlucky cuff from Fate at just the wrong moment had staggered him over the never recrossable line between amateur sport and professional; so, in dress, as in manner, he was more like a high rolling banker or captain of industry than like the out and out gambler, more like what he thought he ought to have been than like what he was. His whole air was respectable; his predatory gleam was of Wall Street rather than of the Tenderloin; the big pure white diamond on the little finger of his aristocratic hand flashed respectably.

His companion, Punk, was frankly the professional sport. His countenance flaunted the look of the fallen man in all its cynical audacity,—the look precisely like that of the fallen woman, but hardly noted in the male sex because it is so frequently seen. Not one of the women striving to outdo each other in costume was so successful as he. Every eye lingered on his summer suit of lightest, coolest, cleanest looking tweed with a curious long nap that waved with every movement of his athletic body. There was a hint of melancholy in his bold, handsome face; but he was evidently too well pleased with his appearance and his surroundings to permit any care to shadow him deeply. Besides, he was young, at least twenty years younger than Shag; also, while for Shag the career of sport was a come-down from what his ancestry had been, for Punk, born in a charity hospital and bred in slum streets, it was a rise, a towering ambition achieved.

"BUCK up, Reynolds," said he. "A few days, and this'll blow over. The Mayor'll take a tumble to himself when he sees he's ruining the season. What's Saratoga without gambling?"

"It's me to the Tenderloin to-night," replied Shag gloomily. "We ought to have left with the rest of the sports. There'll be nothing doing here." He snarled at the throng. "And never was there such a chance to make a killing!"

"Cheer up, I say!" cried Widener, exchanging stealthy, flirtatious smiles with a pretty, daringly

He Twisted Jack's Hand and Exposed the Proof of His Crime.

dressed woman whose escort was obviously "rich, but a rotter."

For answer Shag scowled the more fiercely.

"You're always a black pessimist," went on Punk, adding, with a laugh, "Though perhaps that's why you've got real estate up and down the West Side, and travel about with a roll as thick as a thigh."

"There may be something in that," snarled Shag. "The world's full of optimists, and they all work for pessimists—and work overtime."

"It's a fact," admitted Punk, "that I work most of the time to pay you back your loans."

Shag flushed. "Wasn't thinking of that," he mumbled.

"I'm the one that ought to be sour," pursued Punk. "I'm down to less than two thousand. But," he glanced toward the pretty young woman who was still eying him admiringly, "I'm tempted to stay on."

Shag wasn't listening. He again muttered, "What a chance for a killing!" He was suffering all the agonies of the fisherman who finds himself in the midst of schools of leaping trout, with never a hook and line. "Just my infernal luck!"

**R**EYNOLDS and Widener were pariahs in the eyes of the crowd of financiers and gentlemen and ladies of leisure about them. They are pariahs in our eyes. But, as we are not actually in their presence, and so forced to demonstrate our respectability by drawing haughtily away from them, we can perhaps afford to remember that they are human. We may even venture the kindly reflection that time was when their mode of livelihood was the most honorable and aristocratic of businesses, just as time was when plain highway robbery was the chief industry of the great nobles, the source of their nobility and its badge. But the world moves; and, as it moves, one by one the various modes of living "like a gentleman" pass from respectability toward infamy. Gambling—the particular form of it pursued by our unsavory new acquaintances, Shag and Punk—has passed the line. Let him who begins to be overhaughty and severe with Shag and Punk bethink him that mayhap his own occupation will be next to sink into disrepute.

"HELLO! there's Jack Delancey!" cried Widener. "What of it?" growled Reynolds. He slowly turned his head until he also was looking at the

two occupants of a carriage that had just drawn up before the hotel. "Oh, I see!" he added sarcastically.—"The skirt!"

"Well, don't she look good to you?" demanded Widener, his pirate eye devouring every detail of the face and figure and dress of "the skirt." "Wonder where he got her?"

"Married her," said Shag.

"Married? Jack?" Punk laughed derisively. "Not on your life! He's not the man to annex that kind of trouble. He loves to fly light as the lightest."

"Married," repeated Shag somewhat aggressively.

"How d'ye know?"

"Can't you see she's straight goods?" replied Reynolds.

"And can't you see he's a groom?"

"He sure has the smile and swagger of a joyful ass," conceded Widener. "And she—well, she's got the right look in her eye. Honeymooning, I suppose. He's a nifty devil. I never liked him. He's too stuck on himself,—thinks he's better than anybody else."

"I've observed," said Shag, "that nobody ever minds a man's being stuck on himself unless he happens to have the right to be. Then, whether he's stuck on himself or not, he gets the name of being, and isn't popular."

Delancey and his bride came up the steps, bell boys and porters swarming round them laden with their effects. The young Chicago sport, in the very prime of youth and health, in the sunshine of apparent prosperity, fair and bold and confident, was tall, was built with the slender strength of the Indian. The woman beside him was a mere girl, just out of short dresses. Actually, she wasn't quite so tall as he; but her big hat with its plumes made them seem exactly of a height. She was slight of figure, had a small sweet face, large gray eyes full of wonder and timidity. The "right look" which Punk had noted with a qualm of disappointment was more than an expression of limpid innocence; it was a radiation of guileless, ecstatic devotion every time her eyes turned toward Jack, and they seemed to glance away only for the pleasure of returning.

Delancey nodded friendly to Shag and Punk, then frowned off Punk, evidently about to advance to greet him and be introduced.

"Jealous, eh?" said Punk to Shag in an undertone, with a pleased grin.

"Don't throw roses at yourself," retorted Reynolds. "His bride isn't in our set, and he don't propose to put her there. That's all. Poor little rabbit!" he went on with gruff tenderness. "A sport has a small enough chance. But, for God's sake, what chance has a sport's wife got? Not a look-in! Respectable women won't herd with her, and she won't herd with the other kind. She travels alone."

"It is tough," said Widener in a strained, em-