

The Wild West's Last Bad Man Dies With His Boots On

After Thirty Years of Successful Banditry Henry Starr Is Fatally Wounded in Bank Hold-Up

MOST bandits, on and off the motion picture screen, have their weak spots. Along with the rest, Henry Starr had his. He had a secret ambition. And in the end it got him.

For more than thirty years he had a perfectly spotless reputation as an outlaw, maintaining a schedule of daylight bank robberies that was the envy of every two-gun man west of the Mississippi. His specialty was to come tearing into town at high noon, park his pony out in front of the leading bank and not leave the place until he had a gunnysack fairly well filled with loot.

Any Honest Robbery
He wasn't snobbish about it. He would tackle a railroad train or a station or a plain general store. Of course, he preferred banks; but to keep the old pot boiling he would step into anything that looked thrilling.

Yes, Henry Starr was considerable outlaw. His average yearly haul netted a very decent income—nothing enormous, but steady. He did his turns in the penitentiary with a smile and took his pardons with the proverbial tear. Three times he reformed just for the dramatic effect on his backers. He killed a man once and nearly hung for it.

While most of the other outlaws—the James boys, the Youngers and Al Jennings—were dying off or turning soft, Henry Starr was still doing business with a price on his head—dead or alive.

He should have been content, but he wasn't. The secret ambition kept troubling him. He yearned to be up to date. He felt that he was old-fashioned, riding a pony and shooting from the hip. He had read the Eastern newspapers and knew he was way behind the times.

The Secret Ambition
He wanted to come gliding into town in the latest model streamline limousine, roll up to the bank in style and walk in slowly enough so the natives could notice he was wearing a silk shirt and spats perhaps. Then, when he had finished his little business in the bank and had the officials locked in the customary vault, he could walk nonchalantly out, step in his car and ride out of town as any gentleman should.

They were getting away with it in Paterson, N. J., and Brooklyn, N. Y., and Henry Starr didn't see why he couldn't do the same thing in Arkansas and Oklahoma. It may have been a foolish ambition, but that was the way Henry Starr looked at things. After thirty years of being a Western bad man he wanted one round as a motor bandit.

He had his one round at the luxurious trade and it cost him his life, but he died—as the old phrase has it—with his boots on, and he died happy. For a few hours he had been a motor bandit.

Less than a month ago, into the sleepy little Ozark town of Harrison, Ark., there rattled a mud-spattered little flivver. Besides the driver there were three men, all wearing masks and armed to the teeth. If any one saw the same sight here in the East he would turn to look for the camera man following in the next car. But there wasn't any camera man in this case.

With Engine Racing

The car drew up to the curb in front of the People's National Bank of Harrison. Three men hopped out and sauntered into the bank. The driver stayed at the wheel, the motor throbbing violently as though it were eager to be off again.

Inside the bank the three masked men had complete charge of the situation. With six guns waving in the air, there was no offer of resistance. The few startled customers were backed against the wall, the bank officials crowded around the door of the big vault.

"Get back there!" yelled the leading bandit, and the crowd obeyed.

Cringing way in the back part of the vault, W. J. Meyers, a former president of the bank, felt something hard sticking into his back. He turned and saw an old rifle that he had left there ten years before, providing for just such an emergency. Cautiously he crept toward the doorway of the vault. He thought the gun was loaded, but he couldn't be sure.

One of the robbers was leaning over a cash drawer directly opposite the vault. Meyers shoved the muzzle of the rifle against his side and fired. The robber crumpled in a miserable heap at his feet.

"Don't shoot again!" he gasped.

Others Got Away

The other robbers took to their heels. Meyers fired a single wild shot after the speeding flivver as it scurried down the main street. Then

his days dodging the law it was rather a conventional finish. He is even reported to have given his boy a deathbed message that followed the line of "Go straight, son."

A Robber by Inheritance

Henry Starr came naturally by his talents as a desperado. Among his direct ancestors there were: "Uncle Tom" Starr, one of the most dangerous men in the Cherokee Nation; Belle Starr, known as the "Queen of the Bandits"; Cole Younger, an uncle by marriage, and George ("Hopp") Starr, his father. He came as near being a full-blooded bad man as any in the profession.

Back in December, 1873, he was born near Fort Gibson, Indian Territory, of Scotch-Irish-Indian blood, his father a halfblood Cherokee Indian and his mother a quarterblood. They brought him up "down on the farm." His early culture took the form of riding and shooting, principally shooting. When his father died and the mother married again

owing to lack of evidence he set out with a determined look in his eyes. From hence, so to speak, no one was going to have opportunity to cast any aspersions on his capabilities as a desperado. He intended to make good.

Killed a Detective

From the rather dusty records of the early '90s it appears that he did. As leader of a youthful gang that would dare anything once, he planned and committed more crimes to the working day than any of the veteran crooks of the West had ever thought possible. Finally he shot and killed Floyd Wilson, a detective who caught up with him on a lonely road. Afterward he said that he had promised himself never to shoot a man except in self-defense. Throughout the rest of his career as a desperado he never took another life.

But with the one murder to his credit he was a marked man. Deputies were hunting for him all over

about in his depredations. He camped near towns, told passersby who he was and dared the authorities to take him.

A Daring Robbery

There came the famous Pryor Creek robbery, where the gang held up an M., K. & T. passenger train as it stood at the station. The train and its passengers were looted, the station robbed, the general stores rifled. It was a siege that lasted more than an hour and netted several thousand dollars. The bandits drove away in their chuck wagon and made camp on the unfenced prairie some twenty miles distant.

There followed the hold-up at Bentonville, Ark., just across the line

Colorado Springs, where they stopped off for a brief rest. Detectives, who had been trailing Starr for months, caught him off his guard and placed him under arrest. They took him back to Fort Smith, Ark., for trial.

Murder and 13 Robberies

When he faced the judge in the Federal court there he had nothing against him but a murder charge and thirteen separate counts for robbing banks and hold-ups. Otherwise everything was rosy until he "discovered" that Judge Parker was prejudiced against him. The judge actually thought the man ought to be punished for his crimes. After a long legal battle that involved the

When Reformation and the Movies Proved Unprofitable the Outlaw Went Back to His Old Trade

tory. When a child was born Starr thought less than a minute before naming him "Theodore Roosevelt Starr." The bandit was fast slipping back to respectability.

Before he had quite reached the stage where they were preparing to make him a deacon of the church strange rumors reached his ears. The Governor of Arkansas had made requisition of the Governor of Oklahoma for Starr to be brought over

familiar territory in Oklahoma and Arkansas.

Finally pursuit became so warm that he and a pal called "Stumpy" set out for New Mexico, blazing a trail of hold-ups as they went. Through the treachery of a close friend they were caught at a mining camp in Arizona near the Mexican border in May, 1909, and returned to Colorado.

In November of the same year Starr was sentenced to from seven to twenty-five years in the Canyon City penitentiary. Thomas J. Tynan, one of the first prison officials to believe firmly in the honor system, made Starr one of his honor squad. From long experience Starr's prison behavior was perfect. After serving less than five years of his sentence he was breathing the fresh air again and organizing a new gang to raise havoc in the wild Southwest.

The Stroud Robbery

Shortly after this Starr conceived and executed the most sensational feat of his career, the famous Stroud bank robbery.

With two other men he walked quietly into the Stroud National Bank at Stroud, Okla., and called "Hands up!" Just a block down the street four other members of the gang were invading the First National Bank with the same command.

Dangling in the front door of the Stroud National Bank was a big placard, signed by the Governor of Oklahoma, reading:

\$1,000 Reward for Henry Starr—Dead or Alive!

Starr never flicked an eye at the warning. Instead, he marched straight in and corralled the officials. J. H. Charles, president, and Lee Patrick, vice-president, in the back room. Flinging out a flour sack, he said: "Empty the safe and put it in that."

At about this stage of the game there came an echo of shots from down the street. Soon the shooting became general. News of the hold-up spread throughout the town. Starr joined his own smoke to the main barrage.

Paul Curry, a mere boy but a close follower of the adventures of Nick Carter, ran through the streets looking for a weapon to attack the bandits. At a meat market he found a murderous, short-barreled rifle that carried a big, snub-nosed lead bullet. The local butcher used it to kill his hogs.

Shot by Boy

Starr could have shot the boy as he came toward him, but he had a good target further down the street in one of his old enemies, a deputy sheriff. The boy fired and Starr fell heavily, a bullet in his hip. Louis Estes, Starr's chief lieutenant and leader of the attack on the other bank, also dropped with a bullet in his hip. The other bandits took alarm and got away.

In a doctor's office over the bank he had robbed Starr was laid out on the table.

"Sure, I'm Henry Starr," he said. "What did the kid shoot me with?"

When they told him he grumbled. "A hog gun, eh? And a kid, too. I wouldn't have minded if it had been a man and a regular gun meant for humans."

For this robbery Starr was sentenced to another twenty-five years in the Oklahoma penitentiary. Four years later he was out again, paroled by Governor Robinson for more good behavior.

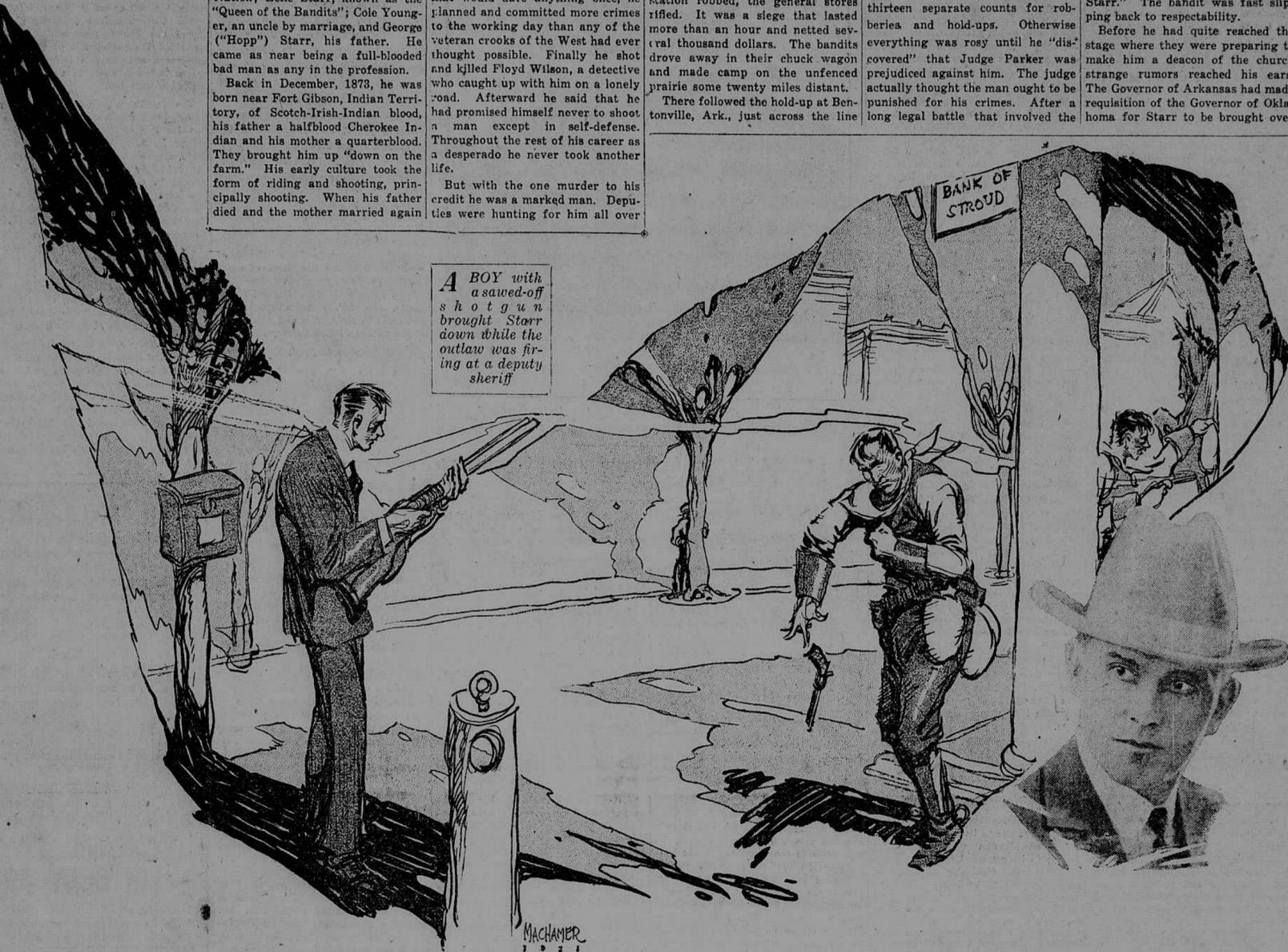
Into the Movies

This necessitated his going to all the bother of reforming once more. As his wife had died, he remarried in February, 1920, making his new home around Tulsa. It grew rather tame—just being a plain citizen—so he thought up a new device for getting a thrill out of life. He planned to put himself in the movies, with a scenario sketched from real life. He traveled around with his film, giving a lecture the same night it was shown and billing himself as the "original bad man of America."

But there was neither the financial success nor the thrill to the business that he had anticipated. A new generation had grown up, not so interested in the two-gun man of the old day as in the modern motorized, silk-shirted bandit. Realizing this was somewhat of a shock to Henry Starr.

No man likes to feel that the times have outstripped him—Henry Starr least of all. He decided to try his hand at the new game. It proved a fatal mistake.

But, as has already been mentioned, and as his old cronies out in the Western towns insist on repeating, Henry Starr died with his boots on.



A BOY with a sawed-off shotgun brought Starr down while the outlaw was firing at a deputy sheriff

he came back to the robber on the floor.

"I'm Henry Starr," he admitted simply.

They took Starr to the county jail and put him on a cot in a cell. The doctors said there was no chance of his recovery, for the bullet had severed his spinal cord. He lingered between life and death for four days, conscious all the time. His wife came from Tulsa and his son from Muskogee, where he was attending school.

For a man who had spent most of

he left home to do his own shooting. It seemed the only way.

Before he was nineteen years old he had landed in jail. His cellmates, an aristocratic lot of horse thieves and highwaymen, hooted him down as a greenhorn. They even intimated that he was being held on a false charge. It was bitter persecution for a young man trying to get along. But he put up a brave front. He thrashed the sheriff in a fist fight and defied the jailbirds who gathered around to taunt him.

When he was released next day

the territory. He was known everywhere, but, as he later explained, nine-tenths of the farmers in the country were his friends, ready to shelter him, to lie for him, to stand guard over him while he slept. He went to festivities throughout the countryside, to dances, where volunteers maintained a guard at the door on the lookout for the deputies.

To show his contempt for the United States marshals hunting for him, Starr fitted out a chuck and ammunition wagon and drove openly

from Oklahoma. It was a leisurely affair, in broad daylight. The intimidated residents of the village, fearful of Starr, hung back while the gang carried away \$12,000 in cash from the bank.

By this time Starr had become so notorious that he thought it was time to leave the country. He said goodby to his gang and drove overland to Emporia, Kan., with his sweetheart, whom he planned to marry. They intended to make their ultimate home in Mexico.

Bad luck overtook the couple at

United States Supreme Court Starr was sentenced to three years in jail for the murder and ten more years for the robberies.

He had served nine years of the sentence when President Roosevelt pardoned him in 1902.

"If I let you out will you go straight?" Roosevelt asked him.

"Sure," said Starr, and the first "reformation" was under way.

A year later he married Miss Ollie F. Griffin, part Cherokee, a girl of considerable culture, who had been teaching in the schools of the terri-

and tried on an old indictment for the Bentonville robbery.

Back to the Brush

"Oh, hell!" said the bandit, and neatly slipped out of his thin mantle of respectability.

Several years of tremendous activity followed. With a newly organized gang of desperadoes Starr branched out and included many new states in his area of operations. He would spend a few months in Colorado, then hop to Kansas, shoot over to Missouri and back to the old

High and Low in London Are Going In for Dancing

LONDON is busy showing the prophets who freely predicted a slump in the dancing craze this season that, like the hoary old gentleman who foresaw the end of the world in 1891, they needed spectacles when they looked into the future.

The symptoms of private enterprise and public enthusiasm point not to a diminution but to a progressive development of the craze. Roof gardens are blossoming forth; hotels are announcing the dansants and dinner dances and supper dances; new clubs are forming, old ones are reviving and existing ones have full lists; and all sorts of places, from the small Queen's Hall in the heart of the metropolis, where in past seasons musical prodigies were wont to introduce themselves to London, to town halls in the suburbs, which formerly echoed to nothing but the burblings of local politics and the warblings of the school children's Christmas cantatas, are being leased by business men on the track of the British dancing public's shekels.

Sounds Like New York

The ballrooms of the big hotels have been open for tea, dinner and, in some cases, supper dances for some weeks; but beyond a few trifling decorative details and the engagement of exhibition dancers of varying charm and fame there have been no innovations except at the Criterion Restaurant, in Piccadilly Circus, where a novel kind of roof garden is drawing all London.

In the big upper ballroom at the

Criterion, Marc Henri, the famous landscape painter, has reproduced the blue magic of an Italian evening, with vines and pergolas, stars and a rising moon, and glimpses of white villas amid tall cypresses, all complete. Dinner is served at tables ranged round the walls, a high-backed, semicircular divan on which four people find comfortable sitting room segregating each table.

The detail of illusion is minute, and goes down even to the table illuminations, which consist of transparent bowls, each containing a single glowing flower floating in water. Enilio Colombo, the former Russian court pianist, dispenses soft music during dinner, and four picked musicians sent over from New York by Art Hickman look after the dance items when the center tables are cleared away and the carpet rolled off the polished center rectangle.

New Idea Is Popular

The idea of a ballroom which should give the dancer the illusion of passing from an interior into the nocturnal open originated with Guy Puckle, a young stockbroker, who is now running the first of these at the Criterion. Its immense success has made the appearance of others in the metropolis and the big provincial centers a certainty in the near future.

But, save for special functions where the sale of tickets is controlled by a committee, London society is showing an increasing disposition to leave the ballrooms of the West End hotels and restaurants to the theatrical world and its followers and

the nouveaux-richest and to do its dancing in the privacy of its own pet clubs.

A variety of reasons, apart from the desire to be exclusive, may be assigned for the growing popularity of the clubs, not the least being the question of expense. Admission to the nightly dances in the ballrooms of hotels and restaurants naturally is conditional on dinner there, and society folk are no keener than ordinary folk to pay \$15 or \$20 for every evening's dancing.

The usual annual club subscription is \$21, with a two-dollar charge for every guest brought in by a member. There are, it is true, clubs where an expensive dinner is a feature, but there is no obligation on the member who wants to dance, and not to sample an elaborate menu, to buy that dinner. His subscription gives him a lease of the dancing floor and a lounge, and that is all that the majority of the regular dancing set desires.

The clubs fall, roughly, into two classes—dance clubs pure and simple and dinner-and-dance clubs. The night clubs that were the forerunners of the latter-day dancing clubs and a feature—and not infrequently an unpleasant feature—of London life have disappeared. They flourished to a certain extent during the war, and after the armistice made a feverish effort to regain their old footing. But a crop of scandals occurring in connection with two of them early in 1919 culminated in a press campaign against what were termed jazz clubs, with the result that Dalton's, one of the most notorious, situated next to the Alban-

bra, in the heart of theaterdom, was closed down by the police, a few more received broad hints and quietly went out of business, and newcomers that were trying to gather a clientele failed.

Only One Left

Of the old established night clubs Murray's, near Regent Street, now run as an ordinary 9 to 12 dance club, with a cabaret show thrown in, is the only one that survived the war and is still going strong. It owes its unbroken career probably to the fact that it has steered a straight course from its inception, playing no pranks with the licensing regulations and D. O. R. A. (Defense of the Realm act), keeping its fun healthy and its list free of notoriety. American naval officers stationed in London got to know it well and some of them scarcely missed a night there.

Ciro's Club fell foul of the authorities during the war over a little matter of champagne served after hours in lemonade jugs. But a year after the armistice it arose from the ashes of its old self, a gorgeous creation of gold and old rose within a white exterior, in Orange Street, off the Haymarket, inhabited by a number of its old expert staff, including M. Soso, the maitre de restaurant; a new chef, Rossignol, imported from Deauville, and a brand-new set of good intentions. It is now one of the smartest and most reputable clubs in town, with a clientele that reads like a list of the guests at a ball of one of the gayer embassies.

A club well known to the American colony in London is the Embassy

which arose a short while ago on the site of the short-lived 400 Club, and has just passed out of the hands of de Courville, the British revue producer, into those of Luigi, late of the Criterion and Ciro's. As its name implies, the Embassy was originally intended to be the special dancing haunt of the diplomatic set, the personnel of all the embassies being made honorary members.

But a diplomatic post is not necessarily synonymous with wealth, and the expensiveness of the Embassy led to a diminution of diplomatic dancing, the ultimate consequence being a loosening of the policy of ultra-exclusiveness. It is still one of the most glittering of the dinner-and-dance clubs, a haunt of the gilded young men, the richer diplomats and the smart gourmets. Members of the Embassy, particularly the Spanish and American, regularly make up parties to dance there and sit out on a wonderful staircase built especially for that purpose.

The two most exclusive clubs in London at present are the Hyde Park and the Riviera. The latter, a comparatively recent enterprise, is about the most eloquent expression in London of the reaction against the loose and lurid dens of past days. There is no "bright-eyes-and-a-bottle-of-champagne" air about the Riviera.

Its list is a skimming of cream from the patrician and fashionable spheres. Two princes and princesses, marquises and marchionesses, figure there alongside Fay Compton, the young actress who creates Mary Rose in Barrie's play,

and Godfrey Tearle and Owen Nares, the British matinee idols, and their pretty young wives. Lady Carbery and Lady Kitty Vincent, two of the best dancers in Debutant's, who are to be seen everywhere in London where dancing is going on, make the Riviera their favorite haunt.

This arbiter elegantiarum among the clubs is housed in the reproduction of a Roman villa built on the river side of Grosvenor Road by Gilbert Scott for Sir Arthur Stanley, Lord Derby's son. Few saloons in the Rue de la Paix could surpass its ballroom as an effective setting for frock and pose. The room, pure and elegant in line and proportion, is simply white marble hung with black velvet, with sharp angle and hard surface softened away by hanging lamps, which diffuse from their thick, lemon-shaded domes a tinted effulgence. At the far end a dim antechamber accommodates an orchestra of three under the leadership of the son of Mrs. Kendal, the great actress of a bygone generation. At the far end deep-embossed windows reflect the moving red and blue lights of the nocturnal river traffic. Similar windows along one side give on a Pompeian terrace enclosed on three sides by high walls and open on the fourth to the river. When the moon is high and the river tide is lapping against the stones that terrace probably will give the starting push this season to more of those romances that culminate in St. James's, Piccadilly, St. George's, Hanover Square and the Guards' Chapel than any other spot in London.