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CARD-PLAYERS' ESCAPE.

In the third of the shattered carriages on the Ballarat train were nine people, four of whom were playing cards. Just as the train had drawn out of the station they had settled down to a fresh deal. At this juncture the collision occurred.

The players were Mr. Abraham Davies, bookmaker, of 21 Woodhead-street, North Fitzroy; Mr. Arthur Heathcote, of 36 Atkinson-street, tailor's traveller, Clifton Hill; Mr. Joseph Drinan, bookmaker, of 134 M'Kean-street, North Fitzroy; and Mr. W. Redfern, jockey, of Glenhamply. The impact threw the whole party in confusion. The plight of those in the carriage was perilous, inasmuch as the car was caught

between two others. The wooden partition crashed down on Mr. Heathcote's back. He is a powerfully built man, and by exerting all his power he managed, by a mighty effort, to heave it up and free himself. The other three men flung themselves at the doors, and tried to force them open, but they seemed hopelessly jammed. The carriage was full of broken glass, on which the struggling men gashed and cut their hands in the effort to free themselves and their companions.

Suddenly the situation became appalling. The carriages above and below that in which the card-players had been seated caught fire, and soon the flames were licking through the floor of their prison. Redoubling their efforts, they managed to burst open the doors by sheer strength, and free themselves. Two of them dropped safely on to the track, and they were shortly followed by the other two, who forced their way through the other door, and reached the platform.

"We couldn't say what became of the other five people in the carriage," said one of the gentlemen, seen a few minutes after his escape. "It was pitch dark, and no one knew what was happening."

The hands of the four card-players were cut and bleeding, their faces were streaming with sweat, and their clothes were torn by splintered wood and broken glass, shattered pieces of which they picked from their pockets after they had made their escape from what was so nearly a death-trap.

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