James met Richards when he went to Cuba. Panamerica Steel and Structure sent both of them to the same job. Richards wasn't from a very prestigious university. James was ready to patronize him, but after he saw him, he didn’t, because he thought that Richards wasn't as smart as James was. Richards had been made the director of Panamerica Steel when the Prossert interests bought the old firm. At first, Richards was a likeable person for James until Richards asked James to check his figures. Then they started to argue with each other about the impression that James made about Richards. In his free time, he continued to check his figures for him. Farrell, the best man out there, spared every minute he could, giving James the benefit of his sharp and scornful criticism, and showing him little tricks of figuring and method. He suggested that he with James should take Spanish lessons from a clerk that he named in the company's office. However, Richards didn't agree with that, thinking that Farrell hadn't told him because he thought he was perfect with only English knowledge. An annual meeting took place between the chairman of United Sugar, Mr. Prossert and Richards with James. Prossert was asking several questions, which James couldn't answer to most of them, but Richards suddenly was answering right away to one of his questions, with embarrassment. After that, Prossert turned his seat and fired questions to Richards, and he answered right back. When they reached the railroad, a motor was waiting to take Mr. Prossert. He noted absentmindedly to James and shook hands with Richards, being impressed by their discussion. As soon as the motor moved off, James exploded because of Richards' dishonesty and asinine tricks. He explained to James that the figures didn't matter for Prossert, only the information that he was going to use. He also claimed that he couldn't remember the figures, neither Mr. Prossert could've. The only thing that Mr. Prossert could remember is Richards and James.