



THE CHINESE MANDARIN.

He sits on the shelf by the little blue clock. And nods his head when it says "tick, tock."

GAMBLING WITH FATE

By WILLIAM WALLACE COOK

Author of "The Gold Glens," "A Story of the Crystal Palace," "Willy's Day," "His Friend the Enemy," "Rogers of Butte," "Kio, Kio."

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CHAPTER II.—CONTINUED.

Picking up the weapon, Darrel pressed a spring and turned the barrel down, revealing the cylinder. Six cartridges nestled murderously under his eyes.

thing but deeper and more consuming pity. He was at the youth's back in time to snatch a six-shooter from his convulsive hand.

"Who are you?" gasped the youth. "My money is gone and I am ruined. How can you get it back for me?"

"You're never satisfied, Cliff," returned Sturgis, tossing off the contents of a glass just brought by a waiter.

He listened intently. The scratch, scratch of the clerk's pen came to him monotonously.



"NOW THEN, MY BUCK," CRIED A VOICE WITH PASSION, "WELL SETTLE OUR DIFFERENCES MAN TO MAN."

money and desirous only of whiling away the time. As he spoke, he displayed a large roll of bills.

"I might," returned Cliff, with apparent reluctance, "I'm not having much luck to-night, though."

Certain of winning, the other two agreed, and from that moment to the end of the game Darrel showed himself the veteran player or he was.

From various parts of the room a general movement of the idly curious had set in towards that particular table, which made it necessary for Darrel to request, in his politest tones,

carded two! Hawkbill, I demand the stakes." Henderson, red-faced, bull-necked and corpulent, swaggered closer.

"This place is on the square," he said wheezingly to Darrel, "and if you've juggled the cards the stakes go to Sturgis."

Leaning forward with a quick movement, Darrel swept his hand under the edge of the table in front of Sturgis. Sturgis tried to stop the hand, but was not quick enough.

The hand reappeared with a small, nickel-plated contrivance known as a table "hold out." A murmur passed through the crowd.

"Sturgis has been using that all evening," remarked Darrel, coolly. "He cheated that boy out of his money and—"

With an imprecation, Sturgis hurled himself towards Darrel, a gleaming object in his mind. Hawkbill threw himself in the way and ordered Sturgis to keep back.

It was evident that the baffled gambler had friends who would rally to his side and Darrel swept the stakes into his hat, clapped the hat on his head and caught the boy by the arm and hurried him out.

At the hotel the young man's money was returned to him. Tears stood in his eyes as he thanked Darrel and the latter, gruffly bidding him remember his promise, went out into the dark street intent on returning to Hawkbill's and waiting for Murgatroyd.

CHAPTER IV. DARREL'S ENCOUNTER WITH STURGIS. As time mellowed the perspective of past events, so it blurs and modifies the characters of those who made them.

The strange features of his feud with Murgatroyd were sufficiently incredible in cold truth; and when the outline of the facts faded with a lapse of years, imagination was drawn upon to sharpen the reminiscences.

Yet no one who now remembers Darrel will ever tell you that he tried to be anything but a gentleman. If the part was beyond him, it was solely the fault of his unfortunate vocation.

In any other walk of life his sterling qualities of mind and heart would have claimed their tribute of respect and social position. A man who believed that his fate was of his own making could hardly have been ignorant of this; but passion for play was too deeply ingrained in his nature.

The recovery of the boy's money aptly illustrates Darrel's character. He could not see anything wrong in turning the tables on the blacklegs and it was a pleasure for him to be able to do it.

He played an "honorable" game; and he considered it honorable to worst a couple of sharpers at their own tactics.

As he made his way back along the straggling street toward Hawkbill Henderson's he was warily watchful. Recent events had taken his attention somewhat from his main purpose in coming to Sandy Bar and the murderous Murgatroyd might be lurking anywhere in the shadows or dogging his steps.

The wheezy tones of fiddles, guitars and a bass-viol, accompanied by horse shouts, laughter and a fall of dancing feet echoed from a building across the way. Other buildings along the street were aglare with light and rife with a clink of glasses, a rattle of poker chips and boisterous cries of drinkers and players.

There were few on the street at that moment and Darrel passed rapidly on in the direction of the gambling place. Abruptly a form hurled itself across his path from a dark space between two shanties on his left.

Instantly a revolver was in his hand. "Now then, my buck," cried a voice sharp with passion, "we'll settle our differences man to man."

"We have no differences to settle, Sturgis," returned Darrel, relieved and not a little surprised. He was looking for Murgatroyd, not Sturgis.

The gambler was in a blind, unreasoning fury. In the light of later events it was patent that Darrel had set a trap for him and beaten him and his confederate at their own game.

When a man like Sturgis has such a grievance there is but one way in which the score can be settled. Sturgis was fiercely determined and Darrel was quick to comprehend his peril.

A flaring lamp in front of the dance hall opposite cast a dim light over the scene. The field was clear for the encounter, no one being abroad in the street apart from the two concerned.

Rigidly erect the two men stood, revolvers ready and swinging at their sides, their eyes alert and watching catlike each other's slightest movement.

"You're either the devil himself or else you're—Nate Darrel of 'Frisco," said Sturgis, between his teeth. "No man could play the game you did without being one or the other. It was Darrel's discard you threw into the deadwood, and you sat between Cliff and me and helped yourself to just what you wanted out of the pack."

Darrel laughed a little at that. It wasn't the first time his phenomenal skill had led a gambler to confound him with the arch fiend.

"You're a bungler, Sturgis," said he, "and have yet to learn the first rudiments of your profession. I have taught you a lesson and if you want to live long enough to profit by it you'll put that gun in your pocket and take yourself off."

An exasperated cry fell from Sturgis' lips. Recklessly he threw himself forward, raising the six-shooter to a level with his eyes.

There was no blood on Nate Darrel's hands. In his whole career he had never found it necessary to protect his life by taking another's.

His ready wit and his wonderful strength—which his slight form in a manner belied—had times out of mind been his bulwarks of self-defense. He had a horror of bloodshed and carried a revolver in humble demonstration of the theory that leads great nations to build great navies—hoping to make the arbitration of war still more remote.

By coming to Sandy Bar in quest of Murgatroyd he had faced an issue at direct variance with his inclinations. He was most aware that fatalities were almost certain to result; if he were the victim, no aching void would be left in the world, while if Murgatroyd fell the cause of humanity would be advanced.

But he wanted no exchange of shots with Sturgis. He had threatened, but it was with the forlorn hope of avoiding a clash.

As the irate blackleg plunged forward, Darrel threw himself to one side. At that precise moment a shot rang out from some point at Darrel's rear, a bullet fanned his cheek and Sturgis, with an agonized cry, tossed his hands in the air, reeled and fell face downward on the sidewalk.

Darrel was stunned by the suddenness of the tragedy. In a second he had whirled to look back up the street, but saw no one. Then he did the worst thing possible for himself by hastening to the prostrate form and making an examination.

Sturgis was already dead. The bullet had penetrated his heart and a stream of blood flowed from the wound and formed a pool beneath him.

The shot and the tortured cry of the dying man had aroused the people. From the dance hall they came on a run, and from Hawkbill's and other resorts a half-drunken mob charged for the scene.

Darrel was found standing over Sturgis' revolver in hand. Sturgis was dead and the habitues of Hawkbill's knew that Sturgis and Darrel had quarreled at cards.

Only one inference was possible. Darrel drew it as quickly as those around him.

"Where's the marshal?" he asked, his voice perfectly steady. His hand tightened a little on the revolver and he retreated slowly until his back was against the wall of the nearest building, the half circle of threatening faces in front.

"We don't need the marshal," said Cliff, savagely. "Jack Sturgis is dead and you're the one that killed him. Do we need the marshal, boys?"

He appealed to the crowd. A snarling negative passed through the ranks of the crowd and the half circle began to contract.

[To Be Continued.]

RUFUS CHOATE'S ADVICE.

Choleric Client Concluded to Follow It and There Was No Further Trouble.

It seems always to have lain within the power of the distinguished lawyer and humorist, Rufus Choate, to lead a choleric client from ways of anger into the paths of peace. Just before the war a southern gentleman was dining with a friend in one of the best hotels of Boston.

Delacour, says a writer in Lippincott's Magazine, the water was a colored man, and the southerner gave his orders in a very domineering fashion, finding fault freely with what was put before him and the way in which it was served. Finally the waiter became incensed and told Mr. Delacour to go to a place warm and remote.

The latter sprang furiously to his feet and would have shot the offender dead if he had not been restrained by his wiser friend, who said:

"Do you suppose that I am going to put up with such insolence and not be revenged?" said the enraged man. "Certainly not. But do it by process of law."

The landlord was first interviewed and the waiter discharged. That was not sufficient to satisfy the wounded feelings of Mr. Delacour. He asked who was the best lawyer in the city, and was told it was Rufus Choate. Making his way to his office, he said:

"Mr. Choate, I want to engage you in a case. What will your retaining fee be?" "About \$50."

The check was made out and handed over. "Now," said the lawyer, "what are the facts of the case?" He was told. Said Mr. Choate, thoughtfully:

"I know the United States law on the subject well, and I know the law of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and I can assure you, sir, that there is no power on earth strong enough to force you to go to that place if you don't want to go. And if I were you I wouldn't."

"Well," said the southerner, accepting the situation, "I think I'll take your advice," and they parted good friends.

Unfavorable Impressions. Once upon a time a man, who was traversing the public highway, saw an automobile approaching him, and stood, intending to speak to the rider if he knew him; but when he saw that he was a stranger, he started on his way, though not quickly enough to get out of the way of the machine, which struck him, bruising him quite severely.

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MARCH, APRIL, MAY.

Weak Nerves, Poor Digestion, Impure Blood, Depressed Spirits.

The sun has just crossed the equator on its yearly trip north. The real equator is shifted toward the north nearly eighteen miles every day. With the return of the sun comes the bodily ills peculiar to spring. With one person the nervous system is affected, another person's digestion poor; with others the blood is out of order; and still others have depressed spirits and tired feeling. All these things are especially true of those who have been suffering with catarrh in any form or la grippe. A course of Peruna is sure to correct all these conditions. It is an ideal spring medicine. Peruna does not irritate—it invigorates. It does not temporarily stimulate—it strengthens. It equalizes the circulation of the blood, tranquilizes the nervous system and regulates the bodily functions. Peruna, unlike so many spring medicines, is not simply a physic or stimulant or nervine. It is a natural tonic and invigorator. If you do not receive prompt and satisfactory results from the use of Peruna, write at once to Dr. Hartman, giving a full statement of your case, and he will be pleased to give you his valuable advice gratis. Address Dr. Hartman, President of The Hartman Sanitarium, Columbus, Ohio.

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