

OUR SERIAL

THE MYSTERY OF MIRANDY.

Sence Mirandy heard that actin' wuz gittin' all the rage. An' got a book, an' whirled right into studyin' for the stage—

GAMBLING WITH FATE. By William Wallace Cook. Author of 'The Gold Glancers: A Story of the Grand Tour'...

CHAPTER XIII.—CONTINUED.

Hardly were they in their chairs when a white-aproned waiter came up for their order.

"Nothing," said Darrel, shortly. "Whisky," said Lenyard, with almost savage impatience.

"Mrs. Gorton and Miss Avery," said Darrel, plunging at once into the matter, "came to me in Anaconda a month ago with a letter from an eastern man asking my aid in an important matter."

"Sit down!" ordered Darrel, looking squarely into the young man's eyes. Lenyard returned the look defiantly, but sank mutely back into his chair.

"This bit of news had a strange effect on Lenyard. He whitened and a gasp escaped his lips.

"Then there's no doubt," he muttered, huskily, "absolutely no doubt."

"Why," answered Lenyard, slowly, "there was a man killed in this camp of Sandy Bar a month ago and there were letters in his pocket—letters and other things that went to prove that he was other than he seemed."

"Who did he seem to be and who was he in reality?" "He seemed to be a gambler named Jack Sturgis. Now, from what you tell me, I know that the other proof was conclusive. His real name was Ezra Avery."

"Ah!" muttered Darrel, resting his face moodily on his hand. "God help me!" whispered the pallid Lenyard. "I had never seen Avery and did not know him as Sturgis. Right here in this room he all but ruined me. As a result of a game I had with him I might have lost my life, but as it chanced Avery lost his. Oh, Elise, Elise!"

CHAPTER XIV.

DARREL CONTINUES HIS TALK WITH LENYARD.

The young man was shaken to the depths of his being. A swift sympathy surged into the look Darrel fastened on him.

"I recall the occurrence," said Darrel, hiding his own feelings under an assumed coldness of voice and manner. "Sturgis was shot by a scoundrel named Darrel."

CHAPTER XV.

DARREL'S FIGHT WITH MURGATROYD.

Darrel was a man of quick wit. Following the cards whets a man's faculties and makes them keen and alert.

quired courage and skill and he suffered dishonor and lost his own life because of it. Do you hear me?" Lenyard's voice rose excitedly.

"Very well," said Darrel, in a pacificatory tone. "Please lower your voice—you are attracting attention this way. Circumstances all point to the fact that Nate Darrel killed Sturgis, as you must know."

"Circumstances!" sneered Lenyard. "All I can say is that circumstances lie, and I shall prove them a lie and—" He broke off sharply, the old distrust in the look he flashed at Darrel.

"I have heard, too," persisted Darrel, "that Darrel and Murgatroyd had a murderous feud, based upon some of their rascally practices, no doubt."

"I have looked into that," returned Lenyard with an obvious desire to parry every thrust at Darrel's reputation. "The rascally practices were all on Murgatroyd's part. Darrel, as I happen to know, acted like an honorable gentleman."

"You surprise me!" "It is the truth, whether you are surprised at it or not. Murgatroyd, under a false name, had laid his plans to marry a young woman in Denver. The young woman was of good family and her father was one of the wealthiest mining men in Colorado. Murgatroyd had his eye on the money and his schemes would have succeeded but for Nate Darrel."

"Darrel meddled in the matter, I suppose?" "Murgatroyd took him into the plot and Darrel went with it to the girl's father."

"An informer, eh?" "Who would not have been an informer under such circumstances? Murgatroyd was given 24 hours to get out of Denver and has never dared to go back there since. It was then he swore to shoot Darrel on sight, and he'd be equal to it—if he could."

"Strange that the woman in the case should have been taken with Murgatroyd, in the first place. Don't you think so? These gambling gentry usually show what they are."

"Murgatroyd has a way with women, and with men, too, that's hard to understand. He's a success at gambling as well as at other lines of business, all through some infernal power which he wields over his dupes. He's a thoroughbred villain, if there ever was one. Now that I have set you right concerning Darrel I'd like to know if you have finished your talk with me?"

"I haven't yet touched upon the matter that spurred me on to seek an interview. There is a misunderstanding between you and Elise Avery, is there not?"

"That is none of your affair, Mr. McCloud," was the sharp and threatening answer. "You defend this gambler, Darrel, for interfering in a love affair and now you question my right to trench upon a subject of the same kind."

"It is not the same kind and you are not Darrel." The young man got up. "Is that all?"

"It would not have been all had not Darrel's gaze encountered a familiar figure just entering the door. A tall, square-shouldered man with slice-black eyes and overhanging brows.

"That will be all for now, Mr. Lenyard," said Darrel. He did not deign the youth another glance, but watched the tall man with cat-like intensity.

"You may be done with me, Mr. McCloud," said Lenyard, leaning across the table, "but I'm not done with you."

With this enigmatical remark Lenyard walked away. The tall man peered around the room, caught sight of Darrel and advanced upon him with slow deliberation. Darrel's hand dropped beside him into his coat pocket.

One, two, three, four—Darrel counted the tall man's steps as he crossed the room. Presently he was at the table, looking down at the man in the chair.

"You will come with me, McCloud," said the tall man, at last. His black eyes seemed to burn as they looked into Darrel's. "You will come with me."

conclusion. McCloud was known to be a stranger in that part of the country, yet he had had Murgatroyd's revolver and Murgatroyd, in calling Darrel by the assumed name, showed that he was acquainted with the easterner.

The conjecture which swept over Darrel with the force of supreme conviction was this: Murgatroyd was the man whose uncanny powers had worked the great ill to Junius McCloud.

So Darrel followed in the track of his enemy. A crisis was at hand and their differences were soon to be settled.

Not once did Murgatroyd turn and look back, so sure was he of his mastery over McCloud. At any time during that brief walk from Hawkbill's to the office of the gambler Darrel could have drawn that ebony-handled revolver and pressed the trigger with fatal effect.

But such tactics were foreign to Darrel's nature. He would meet his enemy face to face, with no advantage on either side.

Before turning into the hall at Kalliper's place Darrel brushed past a group of men, their heads together in earnest discussion. One was the burly marshal, another was Roy Lenyard, a third was the sallow-faced clerk whom Darrel had met in Murgatroyd's office and the fourth was a heavy-set, well-dressed man with a small leather case under an arm.

At a sharp word from Lenyard the quartette broke apart and directed their attention at Darrel. Murgatroyd, apparently, took no notice of his clerk, nor of his three companions, but passed into the building and up the stairs to his darkened rooms. Darrel stumbled after him, reaching the landing as Murgatroyd unlocked the door, pulled it open and stepped back, an ominous figure in the gloom of the upper hall.

"Go in," said he, curtly. Darrel went in and Murgatroyd followed, locking the door after him and putting the key in his pocket. The darkness was relieved by light reflected through the front windows from the street, and in the semi-gloom Darrel stood, silent, watchful, waiting.

"There's a chair in the corner," Murgatroyd went on; "sit down." The command was mutely obeyed. Murgatroyd then lighted a lamp, drew the shades at the windows and took a chair, fixing his dark gaze on Darrel.

A year had passed since these two men had last parted in Denver. Before that they had known each other well. Darrel, in returning Murgatroyd's look, searched for some sign of lurking recognition, but found none. The silence lengthened and Darrel swept his glance about the room. The clerk's desk, with its litter of papers, the brickwork and door of the vault which served Murgatroyd in lieu of a bank, a tall mineral cabinet against the wall, its topmost shelf supporting a large block of "Galena" ore, heavy and sparkling, maps of the mining district, a letter press—these passed in slow review before the owner of the premises saw fit to speak.

"I got your letter, McCloud, but I doubted whether you would be fool enough to come here—here, of all places in the world."

Darrel swerved his eyes to the speaker's face, but hesitated to trust his voice. "Letter?" he murmured, at last. "You must have been in one of your spells when you wrote it," was the sneering comment. Murgatroyd took a folded sheet from his pocket, opened and read: "I shall be in Sandy Bar to-night. You may look for me, for I shall surely come." With a jeering laugh the letter was returned to the pocket. "And here you are," added Murgatroyd. "Allow me to tell you, McCloud, that you're a crazy fool."

The letter was a surprise to Darrel and he stirred restlessly. "I don't know what wild notion brought you here," went on Murgatroyd, "but I do know that you're going to pike out of camp as quick as a horse can carry you. Luck has favored you so far, but you're so irresponsible you're likely to spoil everything. A few words from you about Nate Darrel and the game will be a losing proposition for both of us. That blow-up on the War Eagle trail was the best thing that ever happened—for us. If you yield to any of your mad eccentricities now there's no telling what harm you may do."

This touched at a vital point of the Sturgis matter. Darrel longed to learn more, but knew he could not question without arousing suspicion. He made no answer. "What have you done with that revolver?" Darrel took the ebony-handled weapon from his pocket. "Give it to me," said Murgatroyd, starting up and snatching it roughly. "Didn't you have one of your own? You played hell using this that night."

Fiercely Murgatroyd pulled down the cylinder and examined the cartridges. "One empty shell," he muttered, frowning blackly; "slugs in the other five shells and the slugs marked." He stamped his foot in a fury. "How in the devil's name did those marks come there? Did you do it, you?" He hurled the question at Darrel, who received it silently. "But you couldn't have done that, you'd have had no object in doing it. It must have been Darrel, when he sat in that office, there, writing his note that afternoon I was away in the hills. Much good that evidence will do Darrel now."

A steel letter opener—either a replica of the one Darrel had used in the inner office when he marked the bullets, or else the same—lay on the clerk's desk near the lighted lamp. It was sharp and might prove of use in an emergency. Darrel leaned one arm on the desk close to the instrument and bowed his head on his lifted hand. In disarming himself by yielding up

the weapon he believed he had effectively disarmed any doubts of Murgatroyd's, present or to come. He was eager to know more of this man's relations with McCloud.

"I'll put this revolver in the vault for now," said Murgatroyd, "and when I have seen you safe out of town I'll put six fresh cartridges in the cylinder."

Then, while he worked at the knob of the combination, he dropped the weapon into his pocket. In a few moments he pulled open the vault door, made as though he would step inside but halted and whirled around to see what his companion was doing.

Darrel had not changed his position and still had his elbow on the desk and his chin in his hand. A sparkling gem on Darrel's finger drew Murgatroyd's eyes and brought an exclamation to his lips.

The circlet was a coiled serpent with diamond head—a ring Darrel had worn for years. Murgatroyd had seen it often and knew it well.

Recognition came with a rush. Murgatroyd's hand dropped to the pocket that held the revolver and Darrel's leaped to the letter-opener, and there was an overturning of chairs as the men hurled themselves at each other. A lurid oath broke from Murgatroyd but was strangled under the gripping white fingers of his adversary. The revolver was not drawn nor the letter-opener used; from the first shock of contact necessity threw them back on their bare hands.

Neither spoke. Each felt that this was to be their final battle and the sharp, hard breath came from their lips as they clinched and fought.

Then followed a terrible half-minute. Murgatroyd was like a wolf, remembering only the injury suffered at the hands of one whom he had believed to be his friend. Darrel was calmer, but none the less determined.

Chairs were tipped over, the desk and lamp barely escaped, and then, in a frenzy of brute force, they fell against the mineral cabinet, dropping to the floor with the cabinet on top of them.

Darrel was no match for his antagonist in such rough work and he was underneath. A feeling flashed through him that he had failed, and that the victory would be Murgatroyd's, but the block of galena, tipping with the cabinet, struck the stronger man on the back of the head and crashed to the floor.

Murgatroyd's fingers relaxed; with a stifled groan he straightened out and lay like one dead. Excited and breathless, Darrel drew himself out from under the cabinet and rose to his feet.

Murgatroyd was at his mercy and what should he do with him? As he debated the question he heard a quick tread of feet in the hall below.

Acting on a quick impulse, he flew to the vault, pulled open the inner doors, dragged the unconscious Murgatroyd inside and had closed him in and turned off the combination when the marshal burst open the hall door and flung into the room, followed by the thick-set man.

Darrel, leaning against the wall, eyed the newcomers calmly. [To Be Continued.]

Deferred Restitution. A pig belonging to a widow named Murphy mysteriously vanished one night, and Pat Hennessy, a ne'er-do-well, was suspected of having had something to do with its disappearance. He denied all knowledge of the pig, however, and as there was no evidence against him he was allowed to go free; but at Mrs. Murphy's instigation, the priest went to see him.

"Pat," said the priest, "if you've no fear of the law in this world, at least give a thought to the hereafter. When you're before the judgment seat, what are you going to say about that pig?" "Shure, I dunno," replied Pat. "Will they be after askin' about th' pig in purgatory, yer riverance?" "They will," said the priest. "Will Mrs. Murphy be there, yer riverance?" "Yes, Pat."

"An' th' pig?" "Yes, Pat." "Shure, I'll wait an' give it to her thin, yer riverance."—Woman's Home Companion.

Persian Poet's Wit. The following amusing story is told regarding the shah's relations with his poet laureate. On one occasion the shah read to him one of his own poems and asked for his opinion. "Even if I deserve your majesty's anger," said the candid poet, "I must say that it is anything but poetry."

The shah, feeling insulted, cried out to those who waited on him: "Take this ass to the stable." After a little while, becoming calmer, he tried the poet once more, this time with a fresh set of verses. When he had finished reading the poet started to go away. "Where are you going?" asked the shah. "To the stable, your majesty," was the reply of the poet. This time the shah enjoyed the joke and the poet was forgiven.—Chicago Journal.

Japanese Operations, 1894-1904. The Present Campaign Follows Closely That Waged Against China Ten Years Ago.

STUDENTS of military history and geography are well aware that the same roads in many countries have oftentimes heard the tramp of armies, and that the same places have not seldom reached the clang of battle. To a large extent the Japanese plans and movements in the present war are an illustration of this, being a repetition of those which crowned their arms with victory in the operations against the Chinese in 1894. It is true that then the enemy approached from the west, whereas now his line of march is from the north; but inasmuch as in both wars the Japanese have had for their main purpose the occupation of Korea and southern Manchuria and the capture of Port Arthur, with a view further to the domination of

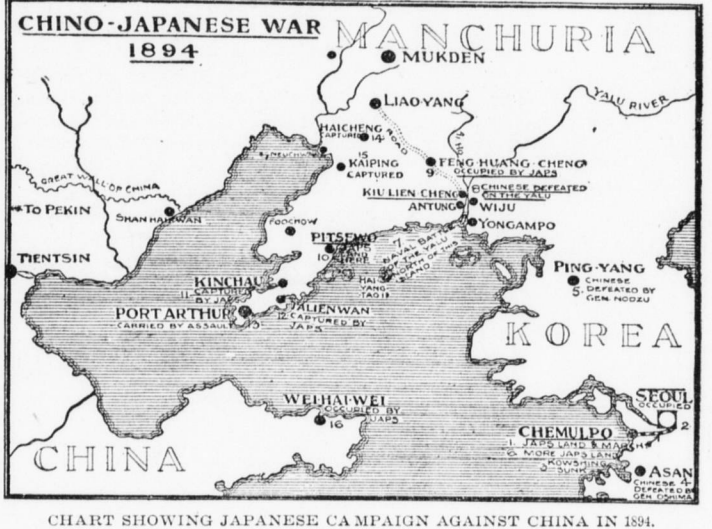


CHART SHOWING JAPANESE CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHINA IN 1894.

China, it is not surprising, though it is noteworthy, that their movements have not differed very greatly. In June, 1894, Gen. Oshima, and in the following September Marshal Yamagata, landed at Chemulpo, and marched on Seoul, just as Gen. Kuroki's troops did in February last. The Chinese were then in great strength in Korea, and were defeated near Asan, south of Seoul, on July 29; but the whole course of the operations was to drive them west of the Yalu. They made a great stand at Pingyang, where they were defeated in a sanguinary action by Gen. Nodzu on September 15, but after that they retreated to the very same positions on the right bank of the Yalu from which the Russians, under Gen. Sassulitch, were driven with such great loss on May 1. The command of the sea was then, as it is now, the ruling factor in the



CHART SHOWING JAPANESE CAMPAIGN AGAINST RUSSIA, 1904.

situation. The Chinese had not, indeed, realized what it implied, and the sinking of the Kowshing, with 1,000 men on board, and the crushing defeat inflicted by Admiral Ito on the Chinese squadron under brave Admiral Ting (September 17) were the consequences. In the present war the conditions were different. The Russians, having lost all immediate hope of asserting supremacy at sea, could not move a man aloft. To transport troops from Dalny or Port Arthur to the mouth of the Yalu was impossible. Not less impossible was it for them to risk an action, as the Chinese did at Pingyang, lest the Japanese should throw forces ashore in their rear. The only doubt is whether they were wise, in view of a like danger, in holding the line of the Yalu at all.

The positions on the Yalu occupied by the Chinese in 1894 were the same as those held by the Russians on May 1, and the Japanese tactics were precisely the same. A little reading of recent history should have taught Gen. Kuropatkin what to expect. It is particularly interesting to observe how the same causes have led to the same effect. If, in the following brief account of the battle of October 25, 1894, "Russians" be read for "Chinese," and the details taken mutatis mutandis, the recent events will be found described: Gen. Sung had under his command about 20,000 Chinese, on the heights about Kiuliencheng, with about 1,500 more under Gen. Ikotenga a little higher up the river. The Japanese had

ent time, though it would be unwise to attempt to forecast whether the place will fall by storm, by the slow process of siege, or by famine. Oyama's troops were landed at the mouth of the Huan-yuan river, near to Pitszewo, in the vicinity of which place the Japanese have landed recently. The movements of 1894 may be taken to indicate those of the present time. The earlier disembarkation commenced on October 24 and Port Arthur was captured on November 21. The troops moved west through the peninsula, and on November 6 the walled town of Kinchow was captured near the narrowest part of the isthmus, and the occupation of Ta-lienwan followed on the next day. It is not permissible to doubt that the Japanese are now engaged in like movements.

From the first landing up to the eve of the attack, the assailants had been four weeks in making their preparations. Whether the same rapidity can characterize the present operations remains to be seen. Port Arthur then was strong, but now it is far more formidable, and it is fair to assume that there will be a resolute defence. It is possible, therefore, that the Japanese may think it wiser to await the time when the place may fall without a blow. JOHN LEYLAND.

A Truth. "A man who is in love with himself," remarked the Observer of Events and Things, "has a fool for a fiancée."—Yonkers Statesman.