



R. L. JOHNSTON, Editor.

IT IS A FREEMAN WHOM THE TRUTH MAKES FREE, AND ALL ARE SLAVES BESIDE.

H. A. M'PIKE, Publisher

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EVERY THURSDAY MORNING,
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We have made arrangements by which we can do or have done all kinds of plain and fancy Job Printing, such as Books, Pamphlets, Show Cards, Bill and Letter Heads, Handbills, Circulars, &c., in the best style of the art and at the most moderate prices. Also, all kinds of Ruling, Blank Books, Book Binding, &c., executed to order as good as the best and as cheap as the cheapest.

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In addition to his large stock of the best Eastern-made SHOES, BUNGLES, GAITERS, &c., for Ladies and Children's Wear, the subscriber has just added to his assortment a full and complete invoice of Boots and Shoes for Men and Youths, which he will not only warrant to be superior to any goods of like character now being offered in this market, but vastly better in every respect than the slop-shop work with which the country is flooded. Remember that I offer no regular sale which I do not guarantee to be the best custom made, of the best material and superior finish, and while I do not pretend to compete in price with the dealers in auction goods, I know that I can furnish BOOTS, SHOES, &c., that will give more service for less money than any other dealer in this community, and I pledge myself to repair, free of charge, any article that may give way after a reasonable time and reasonable usage. Everybody is respectfully invited to call and examine my stock and learn my prices.

The subscriber is also prepared to manufacture to order any and all work in his line, of the very best material and workmanship, and at prices as reasonable as the work can be obtained anywhere. French Calf, Common Calf, Morocco and all other kinds of Leather constantly on hand.
Store on Main street, next door to Crawford's Hotel.

JOHN D. THOMAS.
Ebensburg, Sept. 26, 1867.

SECURE THE SHADOW EYE THE SUBSTANCE FADES.

PICTURES FOR THE MILLION.

Having located in Ebensburg, I would respectfully inform the public that I am prepared to execute PHOTOGRAPHS in every style of the art, from the smallest card picture to the largest sized for framing. Pictures taken in any kind of weather.
PHOTOGRAPHS PAINTED IN OIL, INDIAN INK OR WATER COLORS.
Every attention given to the taking of Children's pictures, but in clear weather only.
Special attention is invited to my stock of large PICTURE FRAMES and PHOTOGRAPH ALBUMS, which I will sell cheaper than they can be bought elsewhere in town. Copying and Enlarging done on reasonable terms. I ask comparison and defy competition.
Thankful for past favors, I solicit a continuance of the same. Gallery on Julian street, two doors south of Town Hall.
T. T. SPENCE, Photographer.
Ebensburg, Nov. 14, 1867.

EBENSBURG MARBLE WORKS.

Having purchased the Marble Works on High street, one door east of T. W. Williams' Hardware Store, and supplied myself with an extensive stock of TOMBSTONES, I am now prepared to furnish all work in my line at the lowest city prices, and feel confident that I can render entire satisfaction to all who favor me with their orders. Parties desiring to purchase Tombstones are respectfully invited to call and examine specimens on exhibition at my shop. Orders from a distance will be promptly attended to, and work delivered where desired.
Jan. 30, 1868. OTTINGER REED.

ANY PERSON intending to build a House or Barn, can buy Nails and Hardware cheap by paying cash at
Feb. 28. GEO. HUNTLEY'S.
BARGAINS can be had by buying your goods for cash at
Feb. 28. GEO. HUNTLEY'S.

EARLY LIFE OF H. P. LE CONNER.

BY HIS UNCLE.

[NOTE BY THE EDITOR.—This interesting history was originally written for the New York Ledger, but that paper having made arrangements to publish the early life of Gen. Grant, written by his father, would not receive this one at any price. Struck with the similarity of the life of the subject of this history to that of the Ledger's, we have arranged to print it.]

NUBBIN RIDGE, Ky., January, 1868.
In writing the early life of my nephew I labor under great difficulty in committing my thoughts to paper. When very young I acquired some facility in the use of the pen. For many years I was made Secretary of every corn-shucking which I attended, and this, with the experience I had in killing hogs, made the pen my favorite instrument. Of late I have practiced very little, and am not very ready at writing. As my subject was brought up by me, whatever I write of him may be relied upon.

I voted for Gen. Jackson nine times—three times at each election at which he was a candidate. I also frequently vote for him now. At one of the elections I put in three votes for his opponent.

In reply to your request for my photograph, I adopt a response which I recently made to a similar application from a committee of old women in Cheyenne, who asked for my own and Hans Patrick's.

Ladies, my kind and gentle friends,
As you request, your servant sends a salt-and-pepper photograph
Of H. P. L. C. to make you laugh.
The picture's good, the subject true,
Which (please send) price by return mail I give to you;
I also send you some of mine,
Not quite correct, but genuine;
This was taken forty years ago,
Before my head got bald, you know,
And now to you may look quite queer,
But right to those who love their bear;
My best respects I herewith send,
(Provided you've a stamp to lend);
And say to both, if anything you want,
That eggs is eggs, but two from one you can't.

The measure of this poetry is a little out of joint, but fully equal in every particular, I think, to that of the father of the great Ulysses.
I never had much money in my life, and still have. For this reason I have given the bulk of my fortune to my two sons, thereby rendering them paupers. My nephew declined to accept anything, saying he thought he could get a situation on a street car, at a dollar and a half a day, which would place him beyond immediate want.

Hans Patrick Le Conner was born a long time ago, between P. M. in the evening and A. M. in the morning, and at the same hour every succeeding day for a week. The house in which he was born is still standing but the ground upon which it was built has been removed. It is popularly believed to have been carried off in pots, by a small band of Fenians, to fill up the Dutch Gap.
The infant Hans Patrick received his mammalian balm in the usual way, and not through the instrumentality of a patent bottle. One of his caprices when yet a child, was to scream with all the force of his little lungs, when he was severely chastised by his parents. This singular habit was but a foreshadowing of that genius which has rendered him so eminent in his maturity.

The early training of Hans Patrick was unexceptionably moral. I remember on one occasion, he was desired by a party of rule companions to go into a field and steal a watermelon. He refused, and said he had been taught that it was wrong to take other people's melons. The boys first coaxed, and then threatened him, but he held out stoutly to the end. I have heard it intimated that he knew there was a man concealed in the field with a double-barrel shot-gun and a bull dog. Hence his melancholy objection to entering. This statement may or may not be true, or both. I cannot say.

Almost as soon as he could go alone, the subject of my sketch manifested the strongest kind of friendship for mules. The first time he ever rode a mule by himself he was about six years old. I had left home to be gone all day, when he saddled the critter and rode fourteen miles to a camp-meeting and back again. He was so small he had to stand on his head to put his feet in the stirrups. Then he would turn a half-handspring and mount. He used to break all the mules in the country, and sometimes broke their necks. I have known him to harness a mule colt when he had to climb a ladder to put the bridle on. He hadn't much taste for horses; they were too tall for him. Occasionally he would ride one. His method of saddling and mounting the animal displayed a wonderful ingenuity for one so young. He would select a horse from the pasture, drive him under a shed, climb on top, with a saddle and bridle on his arm, and then drop down on the horse's back with the saddle under him. He would then crawl out on the horse's neck and put the bridle on. He would often get upon horses in this way when he was preparing to break them.

If ever a circus came to town, with a pair of comic mules to amuse the public,

Hans Patrick was the first boy in the whole community to rip a hole in the canvas and slide in. This was doubly gratifying to him, as it enabled him to see the mules and appeased his appetite for ripping up canvas. If there was an elephant along, he would get ten cents from home to buy apples for him. Usually, however, he would eat the apples himself and persuade other boys to feed the elephant. This fact gave rise to a remarkable saying, which is now very generally quoted, to wit: Charity begins at a circus.

I must not overlook one other event in the history of our young hero, which I regard as having exercised an important influence on his whole life. I was building a log house in Green county. The logs were to be hewn a foot square and fifteen feet long. These had to be hauled about two miles to the place where the house was being erected. I generally worked a very large pair of mules, and Hans Patrick told me one day, if I would buy him a new knife (of about the size suitable for ripping open circus tents), he would haul logs one day by himself and save the expense of a hired hand. He was then twelve years of age, and small of his size. I told him it was impossible for him to load the logs by himself, but he insisted he could do it with perfect ease, and I told him he might make the trial. I then sent the hired man secretly to watch him and see that no accident should happen. In about two hours the wagon appeared, bringing a huge load of logs.

"How in the world did you manage to load?" I inquired, for I considered it utterly impossible for him to have accomplished the feat alone.
"Oh," said he, "the mules and I loaded."

He then explained how he had managed. By hitching the horses to the side of the wagon, he had contrived to upset it over a pile of logs. By means of a log chain they were firmly fastened, the mules hitched and the wagon pulled right side up again, when, of course, it was loaded. The remainder of my logs were hauled in this manner. I bought him three new knives the next day, and the next circus that came that way went out of town with a mammoth rent in the canvas.

While living with me Hans Patrick used to take my stock to water. It was no uncommon thing for him to stand upon a barebacked mule three feet high and ride a mile at a time without falling off. He began to practice this sort of equestrianism by standing upon the back of an ox, that furnishing a broader and safer foundation than the mule's. Once he was accompanied by a companion, who attempted to stand upon another ox. The attempt was too much for him. He slipped up and fell off, slid down a hill several hundred feet into a barrel of ice-water, and was drowned.

My hero was very fond of planting small grain. For many years he was in the habit of sowing all my oats. He would stay in the field and toil all day, and if at night he had any oats left he would go and sow them in the woods. These he facetiously termed "wild oats." He acquired such a passion for this kind of sport that he sometimes practices it even now, merely to remind him of his boy-hood, I suppose.

Yours, &c.

NO. II.

[NOTE.—Some surprise has been expressed that these sketches have been emanated from the father of Hans Patrick Le Conner, as he must have been more familiar with the early life of his son than any one else. In the first place, it is not positively known that Hans Patrick ever had a father, or that he ever had any use for one. Great men are seldom encumbered with such annoyances. Who ever heard of Napoleon Bonaparte's father, or Julius Caesar's, or Oliver Cromwell's? If Bonaparte's father had attempted the early life of his son he would have been thrown into the Bastille quicker than he could have said Jack Robinson—particularly as that name is somewhat difficult to pronounce in the French language. The subject of this history has therefore chosen to ignore the existence of a paternal progenitor and entrust his life in the hands of his revered uncle.]

NUBBIN RIDGE, Ky., Jan. 20, 1868.

EDITOR REPUBLICAN.—I think my nephew's early passion for mules diverted his attention from the common pastimes of boys of his age. He was upwards of four years old before he could play chess, dominoes, seven-up, &c. I never knew him to dance in his early life, except when he was flogged by the schoolmaster. The following anecdote is told of him: He made a bet of six marbles (alley-tors, or alley-gators, I have forgotten which,) with a small boy whom he knew he could take the marbles away from if he lost, that he could jump thirty-five feet at one jump, he to select the ground. He ascended a bluff near by and leaped from the top of it into the mud at its base, sinking into the soft earth up to his ears. He has since got out. For a long time this circumstance caused him to be known by the appellation of "Stick-in-the-mud," a

term that has now become quite common. He never seemed anxious to put himself forward nor to put himself back; his favorite method in an emergency was to shove out sideways. He never trusted himself nor anybody else, and never had any misgivings as to his ability or inability to do anything. His talents for indifference and repose were about equal. His self-possession was also remarkable. He not only possessed himself, but was frequently ambitious to possess other people. An example of it occurred when he was about twelve years of age. He was sent to convey two young ladies in a buggy a distance of several miles to their father's house. On the way, in passing through a broad, deep slough, the horses became stalled, and could not proceed an inch further. The ladies begged Hans Patrick to wade out of the slough and go for assistance. Sitting quietly between the two he replied: "Not if I know myself. I've got as good a thing as I want, and I mean to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer." And there he sat, until the father of the young ladies came and rescued the party. He still retains in his possession the sole of one of the old man's boots, which he captured on that interesting occasion.

The first phrenologist that ever came to our part of the country examined Hans Patrick's head through a microscope. There were many persons present, all eager to hear what the man would say, and the boy, for fear that he would crush the two dozen bird-eggs concealed in his trousers' pockets, remained perfectly quiet while the examination was going on. The phrenologist muttered to himself, as he proceeded: "This is no common head; it is a huge head, a tremendous head, a sapphire." I asked him if he thought Hans Patrick would ever come to anything. He replied: "From the development of a particular organ here (digestive), I think he will come to his meals three times a day as long as he lives, or as long as he has the meals to come to."

This gratified me very much, for there is no surer sign of future greatness than a good appetite. In the afternoon, the phrenologist and I were walking near a pond where Hans Patrick had been skating. He had fallen upon the ice, and the Professor discovered the indentation made by his head. "Marvelous head," he said to me, "it is hard as copper." Hence the term Copperhead, sometimes applied to men whose heads are too hard to be affected by the slippery surface of fanciful opinion. All the phrenologists who came to our place for ten years predicted that Hans Patrick would become President. They predicted the same thing of all the other boys in the neighborhood. None of these prophecies have come true as yet, but you may look for a perfect whirlwind of Presidents from Nubbin Ridge on these days.

In respect to looks, Hans Patrick was a most beautiful child. He was the loveliest little creature I ever saw. His complexion was white as alabaster and his eyes glowed with a prismatic glory that astonished the natives. We used to let him out by contract to families, when they had a child to christen. They would take him to be christened and leave their own at home, thus exhibiting to their friends what a beautiful baby they had. Ladies used to come miles and miles to kiss him. Frequently there were so many of them on a pilgrimage of this kind at a time that half of them had to sleep in the barn and do their own cooking. I do not think he grew up to be as handsome a man as the rest of the children. Ladies would not go far to kiss him now; they would probably go farther to avoid it.

My nephew's passion for hard labor was never sufficiently strong to damage his health. Most of the work we had to do was chopping wood, and he was always very awkward at it. I have known him to break half a dozen axes in a single day. It cost so much to buy axes that I used to let him go a fishing in preference to chopping wood. One day, however, we were short of hands, before short-hand men came in fashion. I told him he must go into the woods and chop. He said he was willing to assist me until he could get money enough to run away with, and then he intended to leave. I told him I did not want him to chop against his will, and asked him what trade he would choose—whether he would be a rope-maker, a soap-boiler or a printer. Subsequently he chose the latter. He made a capital printer, but while an apprentice, he was always averse to distributing "pi." When he chanced to knock down a line of type, he would slip it in his pocket, and at night, on his way home, he would throw it in somebody's well. He broke up two or three printing offices before he learned his trade.

Many persons regard the name of Hans Patrick Le Conner as a very curious and significant one. It is not the name he was christened by, but was tacked on to him by accident. One day he was at a log rolling, when the men consisted of Germans, Irish and French. They were divided up in clans, and each clan had a great deal of cider to drink, of which beverage my nephew was always very fond. He first went among the Germans; and, seeing a fine lad in their midst one of them asked his name. He replied "Hans." They then gave him all the cider he wanted, thinking he was a German. When he went among the Irish clan, he told them his name was Patrick, and they

also gave him cider. By and by he came to a party consisting about equally of French and Irish. When they inquired his name, he replied "Le Conner." Here he was again treated to cider. In the evening they all gathered together for a jollification, when some of them addressed the boy as Hans, some as Patrick, and some Le Conner. Contradictions followed, and there was about to be a riot, when he stepped forward and said: "Gentlemen, you are all right and you are all wrong. My name is Hans Patrick Le Conner." By that name he has been known from that day to this. Yours, &c.,

JOHN BILLINGSBES.
It strans a man's philosopheer the wust kind twaff when he gets beat.
Awf olf we complain olf the shortness olf life, yet waf waste more time than we use.
Don't mistak arroganse for wisdom. Menny peple hav thought tha was wize when tha was onla windy.
The man who kant git abed without pullin others back, is a limited cuss.
The principal difference between a luxury and a necessary, is the price.
Whenever the soul is in grief, it is taking root, and when it is in smiles, it is taking wing.
"Give the devil his due," but be careful there ain't much due him.
After a man has rode fast onst, he never wants to go slow agin.
Faith that is founded on an arrest and a truthful conviction, is beautiful to behold; but faith that is founded on courage, ain't enything more than good egit.
Evra sorrow has its twin joy; the fun olf scratchin almost pays for havin the each.
Those families who are really fast class never are afraid that they shall get chateer, or too much afraid of the gamblers to care to provoke a quarrel with them, for in those days it was a common affair for such men to resent any fancied insult with a pistol shot.
One of the most remarkable men of this class was named Daniel Sturdivant, a Frenchman, the son of a broken down scion of nobility who had settled in New Orleans before the transfer of Louisiana to the United States. Sturdivant had been raised a "gentleman" by his aristocratic father, but on coming of age, and finding his fortunes very bad, had taken to cards as a means to better them. His success in this field was so great that he was induced to continue it, until at the time of which I write he was one of the most notorious gamblers between St. Louis and New Orleans. He was a man of fine personal appearance, and of great physical strength. He was also noted for his personal courage. As a gambler he was most expert and successful. There were dark stories of deeds which he had committed while under the influence of play and liquor, and it was said by some that he had killed half a dozen men in his lifetime. Yet no one dared to speak of these stories openly, for no one cared to bring upon himself the anger of such a man. There were few that knew him that really cared to play against him, but they learned that a refusal to do so might involve them in a quarrel with him, and rarely declined his invitation.
About fifteen years ago, the time of which I write, he had attached himself to one of the magnificent steamers plying between New Orleans and Vicksburg, and had publicly announced his determination to shoot any man who encroached upon his scene of operations. Of course this left him in undisputed possession of the field; and he reaped a golden harvest during the one brief year he conducted his operations there.
It was my lot at that time to be compelled to make frequent trips between New Orleans and Vicksburg, being heavily engaged in cotton speculations. I preferred the steamer of which Sturdivant had taken possession inasmuch as it was not only the most comfortable, but also the swiftest, and time was of the utmost importance to me. It was known that I carried large sums of money, and I was always apprehensive lest Sturdivant should ask me to play. I had made up my mind to refuse him, and if he attempted to draw me into a quarrel, to shoot him without mercy, as I knew that the only chance of my life lay in getting the advantage of him. Strange to say, he did not make any such proposition to me, and I gave him no chance to do so.
One night we had started out from Vicksburg, and were heading merrily down the river, when Sturdivant came to the group which had gathered around the stove. He had been drinking, and was smoking a fine cigar as he approached. All made way for him.
"Well, gentlemen," said he in an unsteady tone, "you seem to be terribly dull. Who wants to play for twenty dollars ante?"
There was no reply. All present seemed to know the man, and no one cared to volunteer to place himself in his clutches.
"Umph!" he exclaimed with an expression of contempt, "afraid to try your luck with Daniel Sturdivant, eh? Or may be you want a coaxing. Some of your must play with me; I can't stand such treatment. Come, let's see who shall be."

He glanced around the crowd as if to select his victim. For the first time I

noted the gaze of one of the group fixed steadily upon him. He was a stranger to me, and was dressed in a plain home-spun, and his face was partially concealed by a broad-brimmed sombrero, which was drawn down over it. He was a small but powerfully made man, and in the decided expression of his well-shaped head I read an unusual firmness and intensity of purpose.

"Are you Daniel Sturdivant, the gambler?" he asked in a calm tone without rising.
Sturdivant flushed darkly, and gave the stranger a dark glance.
"One pe soun call me so behind my back," he said insolently, "but no one would care to apply that term to me before my face."
"Nevertheless," said the stranger, quietly, "I want an answer—yes or no."
"Well, then, I am," said the gambler, angrily, "what of it?"
"Simply this," replied the stranger, "I have heard it said that you claim to be the best card player in the southwest. I have come two hundred miles to prove you a liar." Sturdivant strode forward a step or two, and thrust his hand into his breast, as if to grasp a weapon.

"Stop," said the stranger. "If you shoot me you will simply prove yourself afraid of me. Take your seat at the table and I will make my words good."
There was something in the calm, stern manner of the stranger that seemed to render the gambler powerless. He hesitated a moment, and then said, bullishly: "I never play with a man whose face I cannot see."
"Never mind my face," said the stranger, "if you are not afraid of losing you shall see it when I am done with you."
"But how do I know that you have money for such sport?" persisted Sturdivant. "You look seedy enough, my friend."
"There," said the stranger, "I have ten thousand dollars there. If you can win it you shall do so."
With an oath Sturdivant placed himself at the table and made his challenger to do likewise. Those of us who had listened to this singular dialogue now gathered around the table, expecting to see a scene of more than usual interest. The stranger had not raised his hat-brim, and none of us had seen his face; but we all felt from his general air and manner that Daniel Sturdivant had at last met his match. It did not take long to show us that the stranger was an unusually good player. For an hour or more the playing went on in silence. The stakes were high and the contest marked with rare skill. Sturdivant exerted himself as he had never done before, but in spite of all his efforts he lost steadily. By the expiration of the time indicated above he had lost over two thousand dollars. I noticed the flush upon his face deepen and a strange light come into his eyes. At last, with an exclamation of triumph he drew towards him the heap of notes.

"That was well done," said the stranger, "you are an expert in cheating. But go on, I can beat you whether you play openly or dishonestly."
Sturdivant said nothing, but dealt the cards again. The hand played, and Sturdivant was about to seize the stakes again, when the stranger laid down a card and checked him.
The gambler uttered a sharp cry and sat motionless with his eyes fixed on the card; a worn and faded "ace of hearts," with a dark stain across the face. Sturdivant's face worked convulsively as he gazed at it, and the spectators gathered more closely around the two; wondering at the strange scene.
"Look at me," said the stranger quietly. As if powerless to resist, Sturdivant raised his eyes to the speaker.
The stranger had raised his hat and sat looking at the trembling man with eyes which fairly blazed with fury.—Sturdivant uttered a groan and sank back in his chair with his face white and rigid. The stranger with one sweep gathered the money from the table and thrust it in his bosom.
"The ace of hearts is an unlucky card for you, Daniel Sturdivant," he said coolly. "You played it once when you thought it to your advantage. Now, God help you, for that play is returned."
As he spoke he raised a pistol which he had not seen, and before we could stop him aimed it deliberately at the trembling man and fired. The gambler fell heavily upon the table a corpse; and the bright blood streamed over it, hiding the fatal card from sight.
"Gentlemen," said the stranger, rising to his feet as we stood paralyzed with horror at the dreadful scene; "that man ruined my wife and tried to murder me. I have been hunting him ten years."

He walked slowly by us down the stairway to the lower deck. Just then, as the steamer touched at a landing, he sprang ashore and vanished in the dark woods.
I never learned the history of the mysterious affair, for the dead gambler was beyond human questioning; and I never saw the stranger again; but I shall not soon forget the impression made upon me at the time.

NEW READING (by a fashionable wife.)
—The man who lays his hand upon a woman, without a large income, is a wretch whom it were gross flattery to call a bankrupt.

THE FATAL CARD.
Some years ago the Mississippi river was famous for its floating palaces, as the large steamers plying between New Orleans and the ports above were called. Now the railroads have driven nearly all the fine boats off the river, and left the field to the freight boats, whose accommodations for passengers are by no means palatial. The former class of steamers were in many respects delightful, but they never ceased to be the objects of dread to timid people, for if the racing, which on that stream was reduced to a system, did not result in the loss of the boat, there was sure to be one or more encounters between the more lawless portion of the travelers, in which pistol bullets would fly rather too thick for the comfort of steady going people. The cause for such disturbance was generally a quarrel over a gaming table. The regulations of the boats usually required that all such amusements should be conducted in a saloon provided for that purpose in the "Texas," "officer's cabin," situated on the hurricane deck, but the sporting gentlemen were by no means careful to observe this rule, and the gaming was most commonly carried on at the dining table, in the main saloon on the steamer, to the great annoyance of two-thirds of those on board.

Many professional gamblers used to make those boats their home, traveling back and forth with them, fleeing all who were foolish and verdant enough to fall into their hands. So well, indeed, was the system managed, that the various members seemed to have their different steamers marked out for them by common consent, so that no one would trespass upon the domain of the other. Of course these men were warm friends of the officers of the boat, who were either too sincere in their friendship to put a stop to the practice, or too much afraid of the gamblers to care to provoke a quarrel with them, for in those days it was a common affair for such men to resent any fancied insult with a pistol shot.
One of the most remarkable men of this class was named Daniel Sturdivant, a Frenchman, the son of a broken down scion of nobility who had settled in New Orleans before the transfer of Louisiana to the United States. Sturdivant had been raised a "gentleman" by his aristocratic father, but on coming of age, and finding his fortunes very bad, had taken to cards as a means to better them. His success in this field was so great that he was induced to continue it, until at the time of which I write he was one of the most notorious gamblers between St. Louis and New Orleans. He was a man of fine personal appearance, and of great physical strength. He was also noted for his personal courage. As a gambler he was most expert and successful. There were dark stories of deeds which he had committed while under the influence of play and liquor, and it was said by some that he had killed half a dozen men in his lifetime. Yet no one dared to speak of these stories openly, for no one cared to bring upon himself the anger of such a man. There were few that knew him that really cared to play against him, but they learned that a refusal to do so might involve them in a quarrel with him, and rarely declined his invitation.
About fifteen years ago, the time of which I write, he had attached himself to one of the magnificent steamers plying between New Orleans and Vicksburg, and had publicly announced his determination to shoot any man who encroached upon his scene of operations. Of course this left him in undisputed possession of the field; and he reaped a golden harvest during the one brief year he conducted his operations there.
It was my lot at that time to be compelled to make frequent trips between New Orleans and Vicksburg, being heavily engaged in cotton speculations. I preferred the steamer of which Sturdivant had taken possession inasmuch as it was not only the most comfortable, but also the swiftest, and time was of the utmost importance to me. It was known that I carried large sums of money, and I was always apprehensive lest Sturdivant should ask me to play. I had made up my mind to refuse him, and if he attempted to draw me into a quarrel, to shoot him without mercy, as I knew that the only chance of my life lay in getting the advantage of him. Strange to say, he did not make any such proposition to me, and I gave him no chance to do so.
One night we had started out from Vicksburg, and were heading merrily down the river, when Sturdivant came to the group which had gathered around the stove. He had been drinking, and was smoking a fine cigar as he approached. All made way for him.
"Well, gentlemen," said he in an unsteady tone, "you seem to be terribly dull. Who wants to play for twenty dollars ante?"
There was no reply. All present seemed to know the man, and no one cared to volunteer to place himself in his clutches.
"Umph!" he exclaimed with an expression of contempt, "afraid to try your luck with Daniel Sturdivant, eh? Or may be you want a coaxing. Some of your must play with me; I can't stand such treatment. Come, let's see who shall be."