MISTAKES MADE BY MR. FREEL

A Tinhorn Gambler Who Sought to Elevate Himself in His Profession.

Mr. Hank Blair's pursuit of health on the tropical island to which his physician had sent him was characteristically vigorous. The doctor had told him he must do nothing whatever, and so far as was humanly possible he followed the prescription.

Even the choice of a body servant, which he made as soon as possible after his arrival, was determined in strict accordance with the physician's directions. Two candidates for the place presented themselves, the one named Jo and the other Steve, and Mr. Blair perceived instantly that in one case the enunciation of two letters would suffice for a call, whereas it would be necessary to pronounce four to summon the other.

Upon such trifles often depend happy results. Jo proved to be as alert mentally as was his master, and his admiration for the man who never did anything was such that he was stirred to emulation rather than imitation. In one respect only did he fail to eliminate activity from his plan of life. As it was easier for him to talk than to remain silent he always talked unless he was asleep.

In this way Blair acquired much information without effort on his part. Some of this was interesting. Especially did he pay attention to what Jo said concerning one Freel who had come South on the same ship that brought him.

"Dunno what dat white man t'ink," said Jo scornfully. "Him gib me dollar an' tell me keep watch on yo'."

"Did you tell him you would?" asked Blair a little curiously.

"Sho' did," said Jo, chucking. "Couldn't do no less'n dat fo' a dollar."

Blair gave him $2.

"T'ank ye, marse," explained the darky, hastily pocketing the money, "but dat ain't nec'ary. One marse is 'nuff fo' dis nigger."

Thereupon he received explicit directions, and two days later as Blair sat in the shade Freel sauntered near. With a somewhat awkward pretence of surprise he touched his hat and said, "Mr. Blair, I believe?"

Blair nodded, and the other went on: "I knew you soon as I seen you on the boat, but you didn't know me of course. My name's Freel—Pete Freel. I'm in the same line, only I ain't no high flier.

"I seen you in the ring at Monmouth, an' I heard about you breakin' the bank at Chamberlin's that night. Honest injun, now, what did you butt in for on the boat when I caught that cub dealin' off the bottom? 'Twa'n't nothin' to you."

"No," said Blair slowly, "it wasn't anything to me, but I hate to see such a fuss over trifles. There wasn't cigar money on the table, and you stood to lose either way. These coasting steamers aren't like the river boats out West. They had you double crossed."

"I guess that's right," admitted Freel, "but I did get red headed to see that youngster hand out such a raw one. In a quarter limit too."

For answer Blair looked at him steadily, and presently Freel laughed uneasily. "Oh, I wouldn't 'a' tried it if you'd been sittin' in," he said.

"Look here, Mr. Blair," he continued earnestly. "You know what I am. I ain't chuckin' no bluffs to you. I ain't in your class, an' I know it; but I ain't never had no chance. If I tried to get away from Fourteenth street in New York I'd get the merry hoot. That's why I left. They tell me these islands is full o' sports an' I'm dead sick o' the East Side down town.

"I don't know as I can do any better down here. Maybe I can't alone. But you're alone too, Mr. Blair. Why can't we work together? I'm game an' I'll do what you say. Make your own terms."

The look of hungry appeal that showed in the man's eyes, pleading as he was for what stood in his estimation for a chance to raise himself in the social scale, resembled the mute questioning of a friendless mongrel. Sordid as his aim was, his earnestness made his plea seem respectable.

There had been many others who had vainly tried to read some expression in Blair's face on occasions when it might have been worth much money to know what he was thinking about. The tinhorn gambler, who was now making the most ambitious play of his life, was baffled as the others had been when he tried to discover what effect he had produced. Blair's features were entirely placid.

"You propose a partnership then," he said thoughtfully.

"Well, now, Mr. Blair," stammered the other, and he looked up unable to say more.

"But I came down here," continued Blair, "to do nothing. If we should undertake to work together I'd be breaking rules."

"I'll do all the work," said Freel eagerly. "Just give orders. You know the game better'n I will in a thousand years, but I ain't no fool. I c'n play the cards if you'll deal."

"Well, there isn't much to be done till we get some acquainted. Take your time. Keep a good front and mix. Are you heeled?"

For answer Freel displayed a good sized wad.

"That'll do," said Blair with a careless glance, which hasty as it was gave him a fair estimate of the amount. "There's a cockfight on for to-morrow, Jo tells me. Go to it and bet. Put this on for me." And he handed over a $100 bill.

"But I don't know anything about cockfighting," objected Freel.

"You play the ponies sometimes, don't you?" said Blair.

"Sometimes," said Freel sheepishly.

"And you don't know anything about horses, I presume," with a smile.

"Not much," admitted Freel, catching the point readily enough. "Well, all right," and he took the money.

"One thing more," continued Blair as the other arose. "Talk with everybody you can, but don't talk poker till I give you the sign, and remember I don't know you nor you me. And don't hurry."

"I'm on," said Freel, sauntering away.

"I wonder, now," thought Blair, "whether I haven't disobeyed the doctor. I've certainly been thinking for ten minutes. Maybe I'd better cut out the next cigar and average up." And he went to sleep for the remainder of the afternoon.

As the greater part of the male population of the island attended the cockfight on the following day conditions were favorable for another long sleep, and after giving Jo a leave of absence for the occasion and giving him orders to keep tabs on Freel Blair composed himself for his siesta.

"More I sleep the less I smoke," he said to himself. "If I keep this up I win out against the doctor."

While Jo was dressing him for dinner he reported that Freel had picked the right bird every time.

"Must 'a' win a million dollars," he said with great awe.

And after dinner he came to his master with an envelope, which Blair opened as soon as he was alone. It contained $200 and a hasty scrawl which read, "Beginer's luck. Put a century with yours and dubbled."

Being alone, Blair suffered his features to relax in a smile.

"And he wants to work with me," he said to himself. "Just one more bet for him."

Freel, serenely conscious of his own virtue in having turned over the money he won on the first bet, waited anxiously for a sign permitting him to renew negotiations, and in a few days it came. Beamingly he reported that he had scraped acquaintance with everybody on the island worthy of the name of a sport, and anxiously he asked if it was not time to frame up a game of poker. The game, he said, seemed to be understood to some extent by the natives, but he felt sure that he could "skin the crowd" if Blair would sit in and play with him.

"It ought to be easy," agreed Blair, "but you need some instruction in the game. I will sit in only on condition that you play exactly as I tell you to."

Mr. Freel was perfectly willing to do anything necessary to secure such cooperation, but he seemed hurt at the implication. He almost always won at poker, he said.

"That's the trouble with your game," said Blair. "To play the game artistically you must learn that it is often advisable to lose, especially if you have a partner. The stacking of cards is clumsy and old fashioned, besides being open to the objection that somebody is likely to detect it.

"I had no difficulty in seeing what you did on the boat," he continued. "And if I could tell it, somebody else may. When two play together it is wholly needless.

"The proper way is to play an absolutely straight game. Don't even undertake a crosscut on general principles. You are liable to do it at the wrong time. Of course it does no harm to raise if you are absolutely certain that your partner wants you to. Then if you happen to lose you have the satisfaction of knowing that your money is in good hands.

"That is legitimate poker, and played understandingly it is equally profitable with a crooked game, besides having the advantage of being much safer."

"I see," said Freel, delighted. "But how am I to know positively when to raise?"

"The doctor has told me that I smoke too much," said Blair, "but when I am sure of my hand I find a cigar helps me to keep from telling anything by my expression. If I strike a match it generally means that I want to get all the money I can in the pot."

"'S 'nuff," said Freel. "Now when will you have the game?"

"You'd better have it," said Blair. "You can hire a room at the hotel, and when you get your friends together send word to Jo. I can come around 'most any time."

One unaccustomed to the sporty ways of people who inhabit tropical islands might have been surprised at the ease with which Mr. Freel induced four of the leading citizens to meet him at the hotel for a quiet game, but one who knew might have told him that these simple islanders while they knew too much about one another's habits of play to indulge frequently in draw poker among themselves were always ready to play with outsiders who presumed upon their unsophistication. Wherefore it happened that six were well pleased when Blair joined Freel and his four appointed victims.

Nor did any one suggest that the game should be small. Table stakes was announced as the rule, but each player produced a roll of currency and placed it in front of him before beginning to play, and no man took the trouble to count or announce the amount he had. Chips were there of course for convenience, and the landlord of the hotel, himself a player, acted as banker.

If Blair had previous doubts of Freel's judgment in pronouncing the natives easy those doubts were confirmed by what he saw in the first three rounds. Compared with the artistic legerdemain of these players Freel's knowledge of manipulation was clumsy indeed. In fact it became speedily evident that the would-be sharper did not even realize that he was being fleeced, and Blair smiled inwardly as he remembered that he had bidden him play a straight game.

Whatever purpose he may have had before sitting in, and it is more than doubtful whether Freel understood him correctly, there seemed to be no object in exerting himself further than to avoid any considerable losses of his own. And the unfortunate tinhorn waited anxiously and vainly for the signal that did not come, plunging meanwhile from time to time on remarkably good hands that came to him unexpectedly until his roll was exhausted.

Then Blair arose and the game was closed.

Next morning Freel stopped on his way to the boat landing.

"I got my return ticket," he said bitterly, "an' I'm goin' back, but I want to ask you why you done it, Mr. Blair? I know I'm a dog, but I wouldn't 'a' bit you. What did you kick me so hard for?"

"You're in the wrong business, Freel," was the answer. "When a man gets out of his place in the procession he's always liable to get stepped on."

And remembering the doctor's orders he composed himself for a nap.

NOVEL BIRTH CERTIFICATE.

Ornamental Record Kept by Family With the Aid of Salt Bottles.

Since the old age pensions act has been in operation in England, says the *Strand*, there has been a great search for birth certificates in order to enable those entitled to its benefits to claim their pensions.

As the registration of births more than seventy years ago was not carried out as now, there has been difficulty in many cases in proving the age of the applicants, and in one instance at least a certificate of an exceedingly novel character was presented. At any rate the local pensions officer said he had never come across one like it, and he was quite prepared to take it as a proof of the age of the applicant.

When a child was born in this particular family a clear glass bottle was procured and partly filled with salt; then the letters and figures forming the names of the child and date of birth were cut out of a newspaper and placed inside the bottle, being put in their correct position with a piece of wire, and then more salt was carefully added to keep them in place.

Sprays of flowers and other ornamental designs, cut from cretonne, were also tastefully arranged around the inside of the bottle, and then the whole was tightly packed with salt and corked and sealed. It was then placed in a prominent position on the dresser or in a corner cupboard, where it has been for more than seventy years. The white salt shows up the letters and ornaments in relief, and the whole effect is novel and pleasing.

We Miss the Music of the Ant.

From Harper's Weekly.

There are probably sounds in nature too acute to be distinguished by the human ear which may, however, be perfectly clear to the auditory sense of other members of the animal kingdom.

It has been claimed that ants have the most perfect sound producing organs that have yet been discovered in insects. These are situated upon certain segments of the abdomen, the sounds being produced by rubbing. But nobody has ever heard these ant voices, although many authorities are convinced of their existence.

An attempt was made to hear them with the aid of the microphone, but the only sound detected was that made by the crawling of the ants.

FAULTS OF WOMEN GOLFERS.

They Are Careless in Putting and Have a Tendency to Overswing.

"We do not underestimate the records made by the women players at Baltusrol recently," says a writer in *Town and Country*, "but the fact remains that there is still about one stroke a hole between our best women performers and the average first class golfer of the male sex. And that is too much.

"One or two things strike one immediately as curious about the best of our women players. The first is that most of them are indifferent putters. Some of them are very bad indeed. Miss Hyde threw away hole after hole on the putting green and always will do so until she learns how to put.

"That is one department of the game where a woman meets a man on an absolutely equal footing. Physical strength has nothing whatever to do with putting. Yet it is a fact that women are nearly always bad putters. And whereas weakness on the putting green is with most men a misfortune, owing to bad nerves or poor eyesight or some other ailment of the flesh or mind, with women bad putting is simply a vice.

"Very seldom do they suffer from nerves on the green, they generally seem to put boldly for the back of the hole. They go through none of the torments of indecision that distress the average male when he is confronted with a three foot putt at a critical stage of the game. Their failure to get down in two on the green is simply due to the fact that they will not realize the enormity of their crimes.

"You will see fine golfers like Miss Hyde reach a 440 yard hole in two magnificent shots and then squander five more strokes in carelessly hitting the ball backward and forward over the hole. And they take it as if they had done nothing of an unusually criminal nature. If Miss Hyde could put as well as the average man she would be a match for any male golfer outside of the very first rank. The first thing a woman has to realize is that to take three puts on a green is a positive iniquity.

"Another prevailing fault among women golfers is the tendency to overswing. You will find that men who have begun late in life occasionally fall into this error, but with women in America the fault is nearly invariable. And the reason is almost sure to lie with the professional who taught them. We would venture a guess that neither Miss Curtis nor Miss Hyde ever took lessons from professionals. If they did they have got over it in a remarkable fashion. Taking lessons in games is a common failing among women.

"Men do not fall into the habit so easily. It is rare to see a man being taught golf by a professional. On every golf course the spectacle of a woman painfully swinging a club in front of a professional adviser is an everyday matter. Professional golfers hardly ever possess the slightest teaching ability. They play well themselves, but they have not the remotest idea how or why they do it. Therefore every woman who has taken lessons from a professional has to unlearn a great deal before she can become a good golfer.

"And the first thing she has to unlearn is the long and perpendicular swing which she has acquired with so much labor. Far too much strength is wasted in that swing long before the club reaches the ball. The only way to learn how to play golf is to watch the best players at work. Yet women almost invariably put their faith in teachers.

"Possibly it is because they are more intelligent than men. Man is naturally an imitative animal and learns to play games by copying the experts. Woman is not content to copy. She wants to know the reason why. But in golf, in all events, she is wrong. For there is no reason why. You cannot, except in a few elementary matters, teach a golfing stroke. You can only do it, and let the pupil try to imitate. If the women players will only watch the Herreshoffs and the Evanses they will observe that their swing is short and to the point and not in the least like the full swing which the professional teacher tries to inculate."

KILLED A GIANT BUFFALO.

A Government Exhibit Furnished by Kansas Telegraph Operator.

From the Kansas City Star.

In the Smithsonian Institution at Washington is a giant buffalo killed half a mile south of Wakeeney, Kan., in 1868 by Byron Tyler, now a Kansas City business man. The specimen is said to be one of the largest and handsomest of that species of wild game ever slain. Authorities have said the animal must have exceeded in weight the average buffalo by more than 200 pounds.

Tyler was a boy of 19 when he killed the animal. He was employed as a telegraph operator at Wakeeney, then known as Ogallah, and killed buffalo only as a pastime. Later he killed them as a business and shipped their carcasses to St. Louis, where they were sold at fancy prices.

"It was early one morning that I saw the big fellow while browsing across the hills," said Tyler in telling of the hunt in which he brought down the Smithsonian specimen. "I was carrying a .32 calibre rifle. Getting close to the big bull I shot him just behind the right foreleg. He fell dead at the first shot."

Friends of Tyler told him the buffalo was of extraordinary size and induced him to send the hide and bones to the institute. Prof. Henry, who was prominently connected with the museum at that time, was delighted with the gift. He wrote Tyler a personal letter thanking him for the beast.

Tyler never has seen the buffalo since it was mounted. Recently, however, his son visited Washington and viewed the mounted specimen. He says it is in good condition.

The duties of telegraph operator at Wakeeney were light in those days, Tyler working at the key only a few hours in the middle of the day. During his odd moments he acted as cashier of an eating house near the depot. Buffalo was the chief meat served there. Some days after a long siege of buffalo the menu was changed to read "jackrabbit," but as a general rule the customers at the eating house got buffalo meat 365 days in the year. Leap year they got it 366 days.

But the tourists liked the meat, although the trainmen did not, and willingly gave up $1 a meal for a piece of choice buffalo flesh and a few side dishes of canned vegetables. This gave Tyler the idea of buying buffalo meat and shipping it to Eastern markets. The hunters sold him the carcases cheap. On one consignment of four carloads he made a profit of $1,600.

Tyler also did a big business in buffalo hides. In those days a bull hide could be bought for from $1.10 to $3.25. Cow hides brought from 30 cents to $2.25. One of these hides would make an overcoat. Ten buffalo coats were sold recently in this country for $1,000 each. But they did not belong to Tyler. He closed out all of his buffalo holdings long ago.

Once while Tyler was cashier of the restaurant Wild Bill Hickok, celebrated gun man, short changed the house $2 on a bill. It was unintentional, Tyler says, and he was going to speak to Hickok about it. On second thought, however, Tyler thought Wild Bill was such an accommodating fellow and carried such big guns that it would be just as well to let the matter rest. It rested.

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Red Star Pier 61, N. R. 10 A. M. London, Paris via Dover—Antwerp. Zeeland Nov. 4 Lapland (new) Nov. 18. Kroonland Nov. 11 Vaderland Nov. 25.

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