

Settled An Old Feud.

Two Old Foes Meet in a Game of Freeze-Out.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer.)

The one-eyed man sat playing solitaire at a table in the extreme rear of the bar room in Brownsville, Ia. He was not the only place in Brownsville where liquor could be had by those who were inclined, for whiskey was recognized as one of the staples. There were few of the citizens of the place who allowed themselves to remain destitute of a domestic supply, and there was none so ineluctable as to refuse to have what he had with even a casual visitor by who cared to stop, but the particular room in which the one-eyed man sat, on this occasion, was known as the bar room. Brownsville was too small a place to encourage competition unduly.

There was the usual crowd in the room, it being a river town, and the evening after a river boat being expected soon. It was not every time a boat arrived that anybody came ashore to stay, but sometimes it happened that somebody would do so, and even if it did not, it was usually some freight to be landed, and while the postabouts were bringing that off the boat would have been to stay.

On such occasions the bar room, being handy to the landing, became not only the social center of Brownsville, but also the news exchange where all the available intelligence of the happenings of the outside world was to be obtained. It was not that Brownsville cared specially what the outside happenings might be, or might not be, but there was more or less excitement to be had by the citizens, and even since the landing of the boat, and after his fashion when he drank, his voice was being overworked. Moreover, the small crowd of able-bodied men who were enjoying his hospitality had all of them opinions of their own which they were anxious to express, and so, though Sam, the bartender, was a man of few words, there was no lack of conversation.

The one-eyed man did not drink, and as there was an ill-defined popular prejudice against him on that account, nobody paid much attention to him, or his game of solitaire. Suddenly somebody called Long Mike a liar. Opinions differed when the matter was afterwards discussed, as to who the person was. Some of them said it was Stumpy, but the only reason why they thought so, as they were obliged to admit when the statement was questioned, was that Stumpy was Irish and also red-headed, and a red-headed Irishman was always liable to make a bad break. Others thought that Gallagher had spoken the word, and this seemed probable, for Gallagher was of a morose temper at best and utterly reckless when in his cups. But Gallagher denied it, and nobody excepting the man who had called him a liar, it was that uttered the word. Several persons were talking at the time, but there was no doubt that somebody exclaimed, "You're a liar."

The one-eyed man disappeared under the table at which he had been playing. Had the door been nearer to him, or had there been a window in the rear of the room, there is little doubt that he would have gone outside, but the door was the only available exit, and it would have taken two or three seconds for him to reach that. Two or three seconds form an appreciable interval in the world, and the tendency of most persons to shoot too high, rather than too low, is well known to everybody who has had experience in such matters, and the course of action which the one-eyed man in getting under the table is the one generally approved. He never carried a gun himself, and moreover, while he did not distinctly approve of the use of firearms, he had had sufficient sympathy with the thought expressed to restrain him from any impulse toward resenting it on his own behalf.

The fusillade, though it was furious, was brief. Five revolvers were emptied, and as three of them were seven-shot, while the other two had only five chambers, it was readily reckoned up that thirty-one shots were fired. Considering the size of the room, which was not great, and the fact that there were fifteen or sixteen persons present, it seemed a little remarkable that no one was hurt, but after the first volley Sam came out from behind the bar and interfered gently, but firmly, with Long Mike, who was trying to fire a fumbling sort of way, to reload his pistol.

"Put that away," said Sam, "or I'll brain you where you stand." Long Mike looked at him and then at the bang starter which he held poised ready for use, and forthwith put his pistol back in his pocket. Being unable in the confusion of words which followed to determine who it was that had insulted him, he burst out crying and invited all hands to drink at his expense.

There was a prompt response to the invitation by everybody but the one-eyed man, who had resumed his game of solitaire, and Sam, who was sitting at the bar with his usual skill while the whistle of the Rosalie was heard from the river. Three minutes later Sam said to the one-eyed man were alone in the room.

"The boys are pretty lively tonight," said Sam, but the one-eyed man only grinned.

"I heard that Jim Wharton was coming down the river this week," said Sam, cheerfully insinuating conversation. "I wouldn't be none surprised if he was on the Rosalie."

The one-eyed man grunted again, but his eyes gleamed, and after a moment he said slowly, "Well, he'll find me ready for him." But he kept on playing solitaire as if he had no active interest in anything outside of his game.

Neither did he seem to be paying attention to any outside happening, when after the noise of considerable conversation outdoors the crowd came straggling back into the barroom. It was the same crowd, for the Rosalie had brought a considerable load of freight, and Long Mike, though insouciantly sober to bear himself with dignity in social affairs, was not too much to attend to business, and he received of his men attending to it. Several of his men who had been with him in the barroom on terms of equality were now working for dear life while he stood talking to them with all the emphasis of an army teamster addressing a balky pair of mules.

There were several strangers in the incoming party, though, and the room was even more crowded than before. The Rosalie was not likely to start again for an hour or more and a number of passengers were stretching their legs. Among the newcomers was a tall, swarthy fellow who swaggered like a dandy and who looked around as if enured as if in search of some familiar face. With him were three other men, well dressed as he, but all of them having the indescribable appearance and professional sports "in their words, gamblers—and all of the type that was

common along the Mississippi river years ago.

The one-eyed man did not look up, but he showed no mark of surprise when the tall stranger, having first called for a bottle of wine, which he shared with his three companions, left them standing at the bar and strolled over toward the card table.

"How'd'ye, George," he said quietly enough, but with a curious suggestion of inquiry in his tone.

"How'd'ye, Jim," was the one-eyed man's response.

He did not even look up from his game, and so far as his voice or manner indicated he was utterly indifferent to the fact of the other man's presence. He kept on laying down the cards with no show of emotion, but a close observer might have noticed that he made two mistakes in his play during the short while that the other stood looking on in silence. Presumably the other was a close observer. Gamblers mostly are.

Presently the newcomer spoke again. "Bygones is bygones, ain't they, George?" he said.

"Yes," said the player, for the first time looking straight at his questioner, and speaking very slowly. "Yes, I reckon bygones is bygones. Anyway my eye is gone."

"Well, it was a fair fight, George," said the tall man.

"Yes, it was a fair enough fight," said the one-eyed man. "If it hadn't been I'd ha' looked you up an' killed you 'fore now."

"I reckon," said Wharton, "you was always quick for a fight, George, an' I don't remember as I ever shirked one that was coming my way, did I?"

"No, that's right enough," said the one-eyed man, indifferently. Then there was a further silence, and the one-eyed man resumed the game. Presently Wharton spoke again.

"Well," he said, "I reckon there's no grudge between us on account of the fight, but I ain't fair enough, an' I ain't nothin' to say, but there's another thing that ain't settled. What do you say to that?"

"What is it?" asked the one-eyed man, shortly.

"There's a matter of \$700 of mine that you got away with in that last game. I called your play crooked an' I couldn't prove it, so I don't hold it against you that you pulled a knife, but I want that money. It ain't fool enough to think you can get away with it, but I'll play a freeze-out for \$1,000 right now. If I lose, I'll take back what I said an' couldn't prove. If I win I'm satisfied. But God help you if you don't play straight an' I ain't no match for you."

"That kind of talk is cheap," said the one-eyed man contemptuously. "I don't reckon the Almighty's goin' to help anybody much if he's caught cheatin' along the Mississippi river, but you can see your hands now, Jim Wharton, if you think o' makin' an breaks at me, like you did once. I'll play you the freeze-out, and what's more, I'll win your money unless you've learned to play poker since I seen you last. If it's play, I'll match you, an' if it's fight, I'll fight you to the finish."

Neither man had raised his voice; they were too much in earnest for that. So no one in the room had seemed to pay attention to them. When the one-eyed man called to Sam, however, to bring him the cards and chips for the game, a number of bystanders came up to look on, and among them were the three men who came in with Wharton. A looker on might have thought that they were expecting an invitation to join the game, but none was given and they said nothing.

The chips were counted out, the \$2,000 placed in Sam's hands as payment and the new deck of cards tipped open and shuffled and the two men cut for deal which fell to Wharton.

It was a fruitless deal, for finding nothing in his hand he threw in a red chip to cover the two white ones that the one-eyed man had anted, and declared a jack pot. The one-eyed man made good and took the cards. As he shuffled and dealt them the other watched him, and evidently saw nothing wrong, though it was impossible not to see from the way his fingers moved that he was dexterous to a degree in their use.

In four or five hands neither man had a chance. Then Wharton caught aces, opened the pot and took it down, the one-eyed man having nothing.

"Your first pot. It's a bad sign for you, Jim," he said jeeringly.

"A right," said Wharton. "I'll take all the pots that come. The first is as good as any."

But for the next twenty minutes it almost seemed that the superstition was to be upheld. Wharton won no more, and the one-eyed man was \$400 ahead when there came a struggle on Wharton's deal.

Catching two pairs he made it \$10 to play, and the one-eyed man promptly raised it ten. Wharton made good and the one-eyed man drew two cards.

It was evident enough that he had three, having raised back before the draw, so Wharton, instead of standing pat, as he had thought of doing, took one. It proved to be a jack to his jack, one, and afterward appeared, the one-eyed man got a pair with his three sevens.

It was Wharton's bet and he put up \$100.

"As much more as you have," said the one-eyed man, pushing his blue chips forward.

"I call you," said Wharton, and they raised the pot. Wharton had almost \$600 left, so the show down put him ahead of the game.

"Good dealing," said the one-eyed man, coolly, as he picked up the deck, but Wharton made no answer. Instead, he watched the deal more narrowly than ever. Something he saw seemed to interest him greatly.

The one-eyed man bet after the draw, but Wharton refused to see him, and he accepted the pot. Then Wharton took the cards.

Running them over rapidly, face down, he threw three cards to one side. Then, picking up the three he examined them carefully, and exclaimed, with an oath: "By the marks on them I reckon they're all alike. Maybe they're aces."

Both men sprang to their feet on the instant, and as they rose Wharton drew a revolver and the one-eyed man a knife.

The revolver spoke as the man with the knife shuffled around the table, and with a yell he rushed forward, stabbing viciously at the other, as he fell on the floor. Wharton dodged quickly, but not quickly enough to avoid a bad cut in the arm, and shifting his pistol to his left hand, he stood ready to shoot again.

There was no need, however, of another shot, for the one-eyed man was stone dead.

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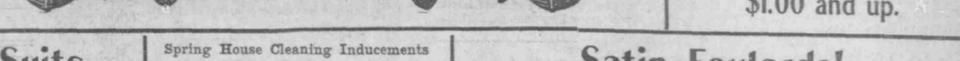
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The 9c grades, per pair	69c	The 7c Curtains at, per pair	59c	The \$2.00 qualities go for, per pair	\$1.20	The \$3.00 curtains go at, per pair	\$4.05
The \$1.00 grades, per pair	79c	The 8c Curtains at, per pair	65c	The \$2.50 qualities go for, per pair	\$1.63	The \$4.00 curtains go at, per pair	\$4.95
The \$1.50 grades, per pair	\$1.05	The 9c Curtains at, per pair	99c	The \$3.00 qualities go for, per pair	\$2.15	The \$5.00 curtains go at, per pair	\$5.95
The \$2.00 grades, per pair	\$1.35	The 10c Curtains at, per pair	\$1.10	The \$3.50 qualities go for, per pair	\$2.25	The \$6.00 curtains go at, per pair	\$6.95
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