

The Sugar Planter.

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THE SUGAR PLANTER,

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W. B. Rouge, Feb. 28, 1856.

A Night at the Gaming Table.

AN EPISODE OF REAL LIFE.

In the year 185—, a party were seated around a table in the social hall of a steamboat on the Mississippi, playing cards. They had played from about 9 o'clock in the evening till near midnight. The party consisted of four persons, two of whom were notorious gamblers, and the other two were frank, unsuspecting countrymen who had been to New Orleans to dispose of produce, and were returning home. At near midnight, one of the countrymen arose from the table, saying to his partner:

'Luck's against us, Bob! Might as well try to beat the devil himself as these fellows!'

'Oh, for God's sake, don't quit yet!—Give us some chance to get back my money!'

'No use, Bob, I'm nigh busted.' Pretty near clean swept out.

Despair seemed written on every lineament of Bob's features, when he found that he could not persuade his friend to play.

At last he said to several who had been watching the game, 'won't some of you gentlemen take my partner's place?'

There was a pause for a few moments, then a young man, scarcely one and twenty, took the vacant seat, saying:

'If you have no objections, I'll try my hand.'

'Agreed?' was the reply.

'Here, bar keeper, give us another pack of cards,' said the young man.

Another pack was brought; the stranger opened them and handed them back, saying:

'I want another color. These are the same color as those they have been playing with. We might as well change the color just for luck.'

The gamblers exchanged glances.

Another pack was brought; the game commenced, and the gamblers won.—Bob grew uneasy.

'Come, let's double the stakes!' said the stranger, whose turn it was to deal.

'Just as you like,' said the gamblers.

The stakes were doubled, and the stranger and his partner won. A gleam of sunshine illuminated Bob's countenance. Another game was played, Bob and his partner were again successful.—The stakes increase—the gamblers lose.

'Bar-keeper, bring us another pack of cards, of another color from these,' said the stranger, who was about to deal.

One of the gamblers looked at his partner while a dark frown overspread his features.

Three more games were played, and Bob had retrieved his losses. The stranger again called for another pack of cards. At this one of the gamblers exclaimed—

'No more changing! We play with these!'

'You play with what you please, replied the young man, as an almost imperceptible smile passed over his features, 'but if my partner and myself play, we must have another pack.'

Bob looked at his partner, then at George.

'Stuck to what your partner says, Bob. He's the right stripe, and will come out head horse, or I'm a nigger!' exclaimed George, slapping Bob on the shoulder.

'I agree to what my partner says,' said Bob, in reply to the gambler's looks of inquiry.

The gamblers exchanged looks, and then consented to the arrangement.

Four more games were played and each time Bob and the stranger won.

It was again the stranger's deal.—One of the gamblers watched him closely, and suddenly exclaimed—

'You— young villain. Cheating are you?'

'Playing with you at your own game. I have watched you all night, and saw you cheat my partner and his friend.—Even now you have got a dozen cards in the sleeves of your coat. I never play on the square with thieves!' replied the stranger, hastily as a deadly paleness stole over his features.

A knife gleamed in the gambler's hand, and, as the blow aimed at the stranger descended, a dozen cards fell from his sleeve on the table. This was noticed by all the bystanders. The stranger avoided the blow, and with a rapid movement caught the assailant by the throat, giving his cravat a twist, and they both rolled on the floor.

While this was taking place, the spectators prevented the other gambler from interfering, and in the struggle a number of cards dropped from his coat. The social hall was now a scene of confusion.

'Game! clear grit, by thunder!' exclaimed George, as he with others separated the combatants.

The gamblers face and breast were covered with blood, as was also the young stranger's hand.

'Has the white-livered thief stabbed you my young hickory,' said George, as he pulled the young man towards the light.

'No, I guess not.'

But the blood dropped fast from the young man's hand, and upon washing off the blood it was discovered that his right thumb was nearly severed. In the scuffle he succeeded in disarming the gambler, and thus probably saved his life. The wound was dressed and the stranger returned to the social hall. The gambler, who was chafing with rage, eyed him with a demoniac look, and shaking his fist at him, exclaimed:

'I allow no man to call me a thief and you must give me satisfaction!'

'I'll give you any satisfaction you want, you cowardly cut-throat,' was the reply.

'And if you can't, I'm the chap that will!' exclaimed George throwing off his coat and hat.

'Stop, my friend, this is my quarrel, and I'll allow no man to take my place in it!'

'Good, my young Davy; but this fellow is big enough to swallow you.'

'Yes; but may be he can't digest me.' 'It wouldn't be a fair fight,' interposed several by-standers.

'Well there's something that nullifies brute force, and places all on an equal footing.'

'That's the talk, Davy. You are my man,' exclaimed George, slapping the stranger on the back.

'He's right!' said one of the by-standers a man about forty years old, stepping forward.

'The young man is right and I'm his friend in the matter. It's as clear as day and can soon be settled.'

This speaker had been a Major in the Texan Revolution, and he led the stranger down the cabin towards his state-room, telling the gamblers to have matters arranged within fifteen minutes. When they reached the state-room, the Major said:

'How is it that a person of your age understands so much about cards as to beat these old gamblers?'

'Curiosity led me to study them, but I never play but for amusement. Most if not all the tricks, I learned of a fellow boarder who had spent a great part of his time at the gambling table. I noticed that these honest countrymen had been swindled and thought it would be an act of charity to beat gamblers with their own weapons, and recover the money for my partner and his friend.—Every time I noticed the gamblers secrete cards I called for a deck of another color; and watched them too closely to give them a chance to cheat me in deal. They did not suspect me until near the finish of our play. You know the rest.'

'Pretty good! but do you think you could face that fellow's fire. He is an old hand at the business.'

'But he's a coward, or he would not have drawn a knife on me. Yet, if it can be avoided, I would rather not meet him. I would not like to have him meet his death at my hands, nor would I like to sacrifice my own life for so unworthy a purpose.'

'It is too late to back out now.'

'Can't it be settled?'

'No! if you refuse to meet him, every one will pronounce you a coward.'

'Well, if it must be I suppose it must; but I have no weapons.'

'Never mind that; I have a pair of dueling pistols, and so if you have any arrangements to be about it for the time is short, and the affair should be settled before it gets noised around the boat.—I'll see to other matters.'

'Stay! make the distance short.'

'Only the breadth of the boat.'

'So saying, the young man went to his own stateroom, but soon returned and seated himself by a table in the cabin and commenced writing. His face was pale—deadly pale—but there was a fixedness of features which at once told that his mind was made up. A tear coursed down his cheek as he wrote—but probable that tear was for those far away, yet still to memory dear. Strange thoughts flitted through his mind—so young, and yet to stand on the brink of death—to make one fearful plunge into that dark unknown river, and to be carried by its current out into the ocean of eternity, to return home no more. A lifetime passed in view in a moment. Yet the genii said "go on—too late!" To die, or kill—either was a dreadful reflection. Yet the proud passions of youth would not submit to reflection. It must be done, and the sooner it is over the better—so reasoned passion, and passion triumphed. When he had finished his writing, he

gave it to the Major, requesting him to follow the directions which he would find in the note addressed to himself, in case he should fall. Also to give his winnings to George to make up for the loss he had sustained.

Then they went upon the upper deck of the boat. It was a calm still night, the moon shone forth in all its splendor. As far as the eye could reach nothing but frosts and water met the gaze. The boat had just rounded to for the purpose of wooding; and when she was again under way, the young stranger, his second and three other persons, anxiously awaited the approach of the gambler. Scarcely a word was spoken—none felt disposed to disturb the silence that reigned. Half an hour passed, the gambler came not. It was now suggested that some one should go in search of him. The messenger soon returned and reported that both gamblers had left the boat at the wood yard. When the young man heard this, a fervent "Thank God" escaped his lips, and the party retired to seek repose in sleep.

A PARTY NICELY SOLD.—One of the best items the Harpers ever raked out of their "Drawer" was the following. It will be noticed that the scene is laid entirely at Wilmington, in North Carolina although the actors did not live there. But to the story at once:

About thirty miles above Wilmington and on the banks of what is called the Northeast River, lived three fellows, named respectively Barham, Stone, and Gray. They came down to Wilmington in a small row boat, and made fast to the wharf. They had a time of it in the city, but for fear they would be dry before getting home they procured a jug of whiskey, and after dark of a black night too, they embarked in their boat, expecting to reach home in the morning. They rowed away with all the energy that three half tipsy fellows could muster, keeping up their spirits in the darkness by pouring spirits down. At break of day they thought they must be near home and seeing through the dim gray of the morning a house on the river side, Stone said:

'Well, Barham, we've got to our place at last.'

'If this is my house,' said Barham, 'somebody has been putting up a lot of out houses since I went away yesterday; but I'll go ashore and look about and see where we are, if you'll hold the boat to.'

Barham disembarks, takes observations, and soon comes tumbling back, and says:

'Well, I'll be whipped if we ain't at Wilmington here yet; and what's more the boat has been hitched to the wharf all night!'

It was a fact, and the drunken dogs had been rowing away for dear life without knowing it.

A MAN FOR THE TIMES.—There is a progressive chap around Philadelphia, who lives by his wits, and from their quality we guess he won't starve soon. On a rainy day, he goes boldly into a bar-room or barber's shop and seizing the first umbrella handy, he very angrily says: "Ah, found it. D—m pretty note to go and steal a man's umbrella in that way!" and away he goes. To-day he marched up to a gentleman in Chesnut street and grabbing at the umbrella in his hand says he: "That's mine sir, where did you get it?" "I beg pardon sir! it was loaned me to-day by an acquaintance. If it is yours take it sir." Mine of course it is sir," says Duddler; and he took it. He'll do.

STROVE BUTTER.—Gov. Draper, of New York, it is said, was dining the other day at Congress Hall, in Albany, where the butter happened to be particularly rank. "Here John," said Draper to a favorite waiter who was standing behind him, "John, take this plate away; some people like their butter stronger than others." John took the plate, held it up to his nose a moment with the air of a connoisseur, then put it back again in its place, and observed in a firm voice: "Misther Draper, that is the strongest butter we have in the house."

One of the deacons of a certain church asked the Bishop if he usually kissed the bride at weddings. "Always," was the reply. "And how do you manage when the happy pair are negroes?" said the deacon. "In all such cases," replied the Bishop, "the duty of kissing is appointed to the deacons."

THE DEFENDER OF KARS.—Major General Williams, the gallant defender of Kars, has no immediate relatives in England. His family is now resident in America.

The French Soldier and Pope Pius.

The *Courier des Alps* relates the following good story, the authenticity of which it guarantees:

A few months ago, a soldier of the army of the East, writing to a comrade of the French army at Rome, drew a sad picture of the privations and fatigues which the former had to endure, of the dangers to which they were exposed, and the ravages which disease and the Russian balls were making in their ranks. He concluded his letter by recommending his friend without delay to carry to the Pope himself the price of a mass for the preservation of the French army and request him to perform it. Faithful to the recommendation of his friend, the soldier at Rome went next morning to the Vatican, and requested the first attendant he met to conduct him to his Holiness. "But, my brave fellow," said the guard, "have you obtained the previous authority for an audience?" "All that is very well," replied the soldier, "for great lords, but with a simple trooper no such ceremony was necessary."

The guard would not trespass on the usual regulations, but the soldier on his side, was so little disposed to give way, that it was found necessary to conduct him to the prelate on duty that day. There, similar observations were made to the applicant, but all in vain, at length, the prelate, despairing of overcoming the impetuosity of his visitor, went and mentioned the matter to the Pope.

As may be supposed, the curiosity of Pius IX. was excited by such an application, and the etiquette of the Vatican was set aside, the soldier being ushered into the presence of his Holiness. On coming near, the soldier stood upright as a post, and then giving the military salute by raising his hand to his forehead, addressed the Pope as follows, just as if he was speaking to the Lieutenant of his company: "Mon pape, here is a letter from a comrade in the Crimea, which which concerns you; please to read it and tell my what answer I am to send. At the same time, he with one hand held out the letter, and with the other some pieces of money. The Pope took the letter and after reading it, returned it to the soldier, saying: "My friend, my mass to-morrow is appropriated to a particular purpose; but the day after, without fail, I will say one with pleasure for that grand French army. I, however make one condition, and that is, that you attend yourself and prepare to receive the Holy Communion. As to the payment you offer, keep the money to drink to the health of your brave brothers in arms."

"That is sufficient Mon Pape," replied the soldier, "I will go and prepare myself with the chaplain of the regiment, and the day after tomorrow at the appointed hour I will be at my post."

He then again saluted *a la militaire*, and turning right about, left his Holiness charmed with his military nonchalance. On the day appointed, the soldier was present at the mass of the Sovereign Pontiff, and had the happiness of receiving the communion from his hands.

HOW TO DESTROY NUT GRASS.—A correspondent of the American Cotton Planter gives the following method of destroying the Coco or Nut Grass:

"I read in your September number, an article on Coco or Nut Grass, by 'A Subscriber.' I approve of the whole; and as I have found a manner or two of destroying it, for those who have but small patches, I give it to you with pleasure, and hope it may be beneficial to those who are so unfortunate as to have them: Spade it (the Coco) with the full depth of the spade, in the month of May or June—the best month—and lay good sound cotton seed all over it, the thickness of eighteen inches; and after it is rotten, the coco is all killed. Do not let anything go on the seed. You may destroy it also by ditching it two feet wide and as deep as the coco is, (which is generally about two feet) filling that ditch with wood to six inches above the level of the surface, and throw back the whole of the dirt and coco upon it, and keep on ditching, leaving a space of eight inches between each, until you get through, doing the same as the first, and set fire to both ends of the ditches, (April, May or June, are good months) I saw one patch destroyed, and then destroyed one myself, by the fire; but with the cotton seed, I destroyed so many, that I cannot say the number. I am, sir, your obedient servant." L. P.

Boston has six thousand more females than males, while Chicago has about fifteen thousand more males than females.

A HARDSHELL BAPTIST SERMON.—

We find the following short but decided "Hard-Shell Baptist Sermon" going the rounds of the papers without a sign of credit, although the scene, as they have it in theatrical parlance, is laid in the interior of Kentucky. It is averred that the thing is genuine—that the sermon or harangue was really delivered. Be this as it may, it almost equals, in closeness of argument and stickiness to text the "Spontaneous efforts" of the clerical hero who played so lustily upon a "Harp of a Thousand Strings." But read the sermon and judge for yourselves.

My Brethren: The scriptures tells us, "we are buried with Christ by baptism." "Buried," my friends, not sprinkled by baptism.

Suppose one of you had lost your little darter, and you had laid her out, and prepared her for the grave; and your neighbors had come in and said: "Friend, we will take thy child and bury it;" and afterwards, when you went out to see the grave of your little one, you found they had laid her down and sprinkled a little earth over her! What would you have thought of them?

Suppose, again, that in the fall of the year, you had dug your potatoes, your turnips, your parsnips, and your other roots for winter use, and had dug a trench to bury them in; and you had said to your servant, "Sally take the house gang and go and bury those potatoes, those turnips, those parsnips and other roots;" and afterwards when you walked forth to see that all was secure for the winter's use, and you had found that they had just sprinkled a little dirt on them! What, my friends, would have done? I rather suppose, my dear brethren, you would ha' tried the virtewes of the cow skin!

But they are not a bit worse than those poor, ignorant and benighted Episcopalians and Presbyterians, and Methodists, who sprinkle a little water on one another, and call it "buried by baptism!"

"I am afraid, my friends, I am very much afraid indeed, that they will catch something hotter than the cow skin in the day of reck'ning!"

ANECDOTE OF THE NEW CHAPLAIN.—The Rev. Henry Clay Dean, the present Chaplain of the United States Senate, was some years ago a resident of North-Western Virginia. While preaching one day at a church situated a few miles from Fairmont, he was annoyed by the inattention of his congregation as manifested in turning their heads to see every body who came in. "Brethren," he said, "it is very difficult to preach when thus interrupted. Now, do you listen to me, and I will tell you the name of every man as he enters the church." Of course the remark attracted universal attention. Presently some one entered: "Brother William Satterfield!" called out the preacher, while the brother was astonished beyond measure, and endeavored in vain to guess what was the matter. Another person came in: "Brother Joseph Miller!" bawled the preacher with like result; and so perhaps with other cases. After a while the congregation was amazed at hearing the preacher call out in a loud voice: "A little low man with a blue coat and a white hat on! Don't know who he is! I you may look for yourselves!"—Fairmount Virginian.

A TOPER'S OBJECTION TO WATER.—An old toper being urged to drink the beverage prepared by God himself to nourish and invigorate his creatures, and beautify his footstool.

"No," said the toper, "water is dangerous—very. It drowns people—it gets into their chests—into their heads, water on the brain for instance. And then, too; it makes that infernal steam alters blowing a feller up. Water! No! I'll drink none on't; let them drink it what likes."

Upon being urged that liquor drinking was slow poison—

"True," said he, "I've drank it those forty years. Others have had my full share of the water, to which they were welcome, and you may take what remains."

Toper was declared to be a gone case, and past recovery.

An old cynic, at a concert one night, read in the programme the title of a song, viz:

"O, give me a cot in the valley I love." Reading it over attentively, the old fellow finally growled, "well, if I had my choice, I would ask for a bedstead!"

"Madame, has your piano an aeolian attachment?" asked Sam, the other night of the wife of a man who appeared to live up to it not beyond his income.

"Hush," whispered Seth in his ear, "it has a sheriff's attachment."