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A COLD BLOODED MONARCH.

Louis XV. and the Dead Man at the Card Table—A Woman Who Gambled on Her Deathbed—Lord Denison's Play While His Bride Waited at the Altar.

If the full story of the card table could be written it would surely be the most startling revelation of human cupidity ever published, and almost every page of it would be marked by some incident which would outstrip fiction.

When Louis XV. was at the card table the fascination of the game made him absolutely dead to all externals and even to decency and humanity. On one occasion when he was playing for heavy stakes one of his opponents, overcome by excitement, collapsed in his chair in a fit of apoplexy. His majesty affected to ignore the incident until some one exclaimed, "M. de Chauvelin is ill!" "Ill?" retorted the king, casting a careless glance at the stricken man; "he is dead. Take him away. Spades are trumps, gentlemen!"

Equally weird is a story Goldsmith tells. When the clergyman arrived to prepare a lady parishioner who had a passion for gambling for her approaching death the lady after listening for a short time to his exhortation exclaimed: "That's enough! Now let us have a game of cards." To humor her the parson consented to play. The dying woman won all his money and had just suggested playing for her funeral fee when she fell back and expired.

In the early years of last century a whist club composed largely of clergymen used to meet in the back room of a barber's shop in a Somersetshire town. On one occasion, so the story runs, when four of the club members were acting as pallbearers at the funeral of a reverend brother, some delay occurred, and the coffin was set down in the chancel. One of them produced a pack of cards and suggested a rubber. The coffin served the purpose of a table, and the players were deeply immersed in the game when the sexton arrived to announce that everything was at last ready.

Mazarin's passion for gambling was so strong even in death that he played cards to the very end, when he was so weak that they had to be held for him, and the "merry monarch" spent his last Sunday on earth playing at basset round a large table with his great courtiers and other dissolute persons and with a bank of at least £2,000 before him.

The curious fascination cards possess for their devotees is illustrated by the following story of Lord Granville, at the time ambassador to France. One afternoon when he was about to return to Paris he repaired to Graham's to have a farewell game of whist, ordering his carriage to be at the door at 4. When it arrived he was much too deep in the game to be disturbed. At 10 o'clock he sent out to say that he was not ready and that the horses had better be changed. Six hours later the same message was sent out, and twice more the waiting horses were changed before he consented to leave the table after losing £10,000.

An equally remarkable story is told of George Payne, the great turf plunger of seventy years ago. On one occasion he sat down at Limmer's hotel to play cards with Lord Albert Denison, later the first Lord Londesborough. Hour after hour passed. The game proceeded all through the night and long after day dawned, and it was not until an urgent message came to tell Lord Albert that his bride was waiting for him at the altar of St. George's, Hanover square, that the cards were at last flung down. It was Lord Albert's wedding day, and he met his bride £30,000 poorer than when he left her on the previous day.

One of the most romantic of gambling stories is told by Mr. Thiselton-Dyer of a plainly dressed stranger who once took his seat at a faro table and after an extraordinary run of luck succeeded in breaking the bank. "Heavens," exclaimed an old, infirm Austrian officer who had sat next to the stranger, "the twentieth part of your gains would make me the happiest man in the world!" "You shall have it, then," answered the stranger as he left the room.

A servant speedily returned and presented the officer with the twentieth part of the bank, adding, "My master, sir, requires no answer." The successful stranger was soon discovered to be the king of Prussia in disguise.

The most costly game of cards on record was probably that in which the late George McCulloch, chairman of the Broken Hill Proprietary company, once took part. A syndicate of seven had been formed to finance the famous Broken Hill silver mine, and Mr. McCulloch was one of the seven. One day, while sitting in a shanty at the foot of the hill, McCulloch offered a fourteenth share in the mine to a young man named Cox for £200.

Cox would only offer £120, and after much haggling it was decided to settle the dispute by a game of euchre. If Cox proved the winner he was to have the share for £120. If he lost he was to pay £180 for it. He won and for the absurd sum of £120 became owner of the share which a few years later was valued at £1,250,000.—London Tit-Bits.

PAYING FOR A MEAL.

It Was Worth About a Shilling to Pick Those Bones.

Colonel Ebenezer Sproat of Revolutionary fame was born and bred in Middleboro, Mass. He was always fond of a joke and was quick to seize an opportunity to indulge his propensity, as the following incident illustrates. His father, also a Colonel Sproat, kept a tavern. One day while Ebenezer was at home on a furlough three private soldiers, on their return from the seat of war, called for a cold luncheon.

Mrs. Sproat set on the table some bread and cheese with the remnants of the family dinner, which her son thought rather scanty fare for hungry men. He felt a little vexed that the defenders of the country were not more bountifully supplied. The soldiers, after satisfying their appetites, asked him how much they should pay. Ebenezer said he would ask his mother. He found her in the kitchen.

"Mother," he said, "how much is it worth to pick those bones?"

"About a shilling, I guess," she answered.

The young officer returned to the soldiers and, taking from the barroom till 3 shillings and smiling genially upon them, gave each man one and with good wishes sent them on their way. Mrs. Sproat soon after came in and asked Ebenezer what he had done with the money for the soldiers' dinner.

In apparent amazement he exclaimed: "Money! Did I not ask you what it was worth to pick those bones, and you said a shilling? I thought it little enough, for the bones were pretty bare, and I handed the men the money from the till, and they are gone."

Mrs. Sproat could not find heart to reprove her favorite son for this misinterpretation of her words, and then she, too, loved a joke, and so, after an instant's glum look, she laughed and said it was all right.

Had Seen Them All Before.

Once while James Whitcomb Riley was visiting a town where he was booked to give a reading a committee called to take him in a carriage over the city. In acknowledging the compliment he said:

"I'll go with you, gentlemen, provided you promise that you will not show me the new courthouse, the new town hall, the new bridge, the new school building and the new jail, for I've seen them all a hundred times in as many towns, and they invariably wear me out before the time arrives for the curtain to rise on the evening entertainment."

Influence of Mountains.

The influence of the mountain is pure and holy, giving strength and simplicity, encouraging the older virtues, discouraging the newer vices. In the hill men of Wales we see this clearly enough. Go where you will among the wilder and more mountainous parts of Wales and you will find that rare independence and self reliance which are not marred by a curiously defiant discourtesy. You find there those that are truly "nature's gentlemen."—London Standard.

A Good Reason.

One day Mary was found standing on a chair in front of the mirror, gazing at her pretty image.

"Why are you looking in the glass, darling?" asked her mother.

"'Cause I like the look of me," was the frank reply.—Chicago News.

Ungallant.

"Officer, I appeal for protection. A man is following me and attempting to make love to me."

"Begorry. Ov've been lookin' for an escaped lunatic. Where is he?"—Kansas City Times.

Why He Barked.

A witness in an Irish court talked so loud that Charles Philips, who was counsel on the other side, said, "Fellow, why do you bark so furiously?"

"Because," said the man, looking hard at Philips, "I think I see a thief!"

Retribution.

Tommy—Pop, what is retribution? Tommy's Pop—Retribution, my son, is something that we are sure will eventually overtake other people.—Philadelphia Record.

How Rows Begin.

"Hubby, I dreamed last night that you didn't love me."

"How foolish you are!"

"Foolish, am I? As if I could help what I dream about!"

And the fracas was on.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

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