

CHEATED AT POKER.

A PAGE FROM THE UNWRITTEN HISTORY OF A UNIVERSITY.

Punishment Meted Out to a Dishonest Student by Society and the Faculty—A Young Man Who Kept His Mouth Shut About His Brilliant Antecedents.

"Talking about poker," said a middle-aged man to a cotillion at Chamberlain's, "reminds me of something that occurred about 20 years ago at the University of Virginia. That was about the liveliest epoch in the history of the university since the war, or for that matter of that before it, when the life led by the students is taken into consideration. There was a big crowd of devil may care young men there, most of them with plenty of money, and they made Charlottesville and surrounding Albemarle fairly hum. These kindred spirits formed a society which took the name of 'El Bananas.'"

Here the speaker smiled at evidently amusing reminiscences. "There is no telling what the 'El Bananas' didn't do. For the quintessence of mischief and deviltry they took the laurels. There was nothing downright bad about them, but their antics were awful. Fantastic were the tricks they played and grotesque their jokes. Between freaks the Elts were prone to poker, and it was customary down there for the players to assemble at this or that student's room. That brings me to my story. One rotter of poker players comprised some of the best known and wealthiest men in the south, and into it was introduced a young Virginian who was gifted with many attractive traits apparently, but whose antecedents were not particularly brilliant. I'll call him Dick Lark, but that wasn't his name.

Met of the other fellows in the cotillion had roommates who were looking up for the final examinations. It was well along in the spring, and Lark had quarters to himself on East Lawn. Consequently the poker began to be played exclusively in his room. When the evening seemed propitious, the word would be passed around at supper that 'three Kentuck' would be in order, and at 8 o'clock or thereabout the players would assemble at Lark's. Lark's luck was stupendous. He won steadily, and as the game was pretty stiff his winnings were substantial. It was noticed after awhile that he always passed out when somebody had a particularly big hand on somebody else's deal, but that he always held a top hand when there were big ones out against each other on his own deal. Then somebody noticed that the deals were always broken on the half dozen new decks of cards provided each night before the game began and that Lark in dealing always closely scrutinized the cards as he gave them out.

At last one night the son of a famous Confederate general who now lives in Baltimore became convinced that Lark was cheating. Picking up the deck that Lark had just dealt and out of which he had got a hand with four queens against an ace full held by a young Kentuckian the young man said quietly:

"Some one is cheating at this game, and, Lark, I think it's you."

"Now, at the University of Virginia such a declaration, if improved, meant somebody's death to a certainty, and in an instant the party was on its feet.

"Just wait a minute, gentlemen," said the accuser quietly. "I've been watching this man. Let some one examine the tacks of these cards with this magnifying glass."

"The Kentuckian took the glass and closely scanned the geometrical designs on the backs of the cards.

"By Caesar!" he ejaculated. "Every court card is distinctly marked." Examination by the other players quickly proved the truth of this.

"There was a consultation over what should be done with Lark, who stood with head hung down, overwhelmed with the proof against him. It was decided that he was not worth calling out, as he was not a gentleman, and the verdict was that he should make restitution of all the money he had won since his participation in the game and suffer ostracism in the university. He was compelled to sit down and write out a check for all the money he had won, the memorandum books of the other players showing the amounts they had lost at various times, and he was kept under surveillance until the Charlottesville bank, in which he kept a heavy account, opened next morning. One of the party rode down to Charlottesville and cashed the check, and then the sentence of ostracism went into effect.

"That fellow had the unheard of effrontery to remain at the university until the finals were completed. He was there six weeks. No student or professor or servant or townsman, no man or woman, white or black, spoke to him or took any notice of him. He attended the final balls, and no one recognized him. He was not quizzed in a lecture room or addressed by a professor. Still he remained until the university closed for the season, but he might as well have been in the middle of the Sahara desert so far as intercourse with people was concerned."—Washington Star.

Imported. "Ah," said the Jacksonville man, as he sat in his luxurious library, "there's nothing like a good Havana cigar!"

And over in Havana the wealthy Cuban who was smoking turned to a friend and remarked ecstatically: "This is what I call a good cigar. It's a Florida product. I import it myself."—Philadelphia North American.

On nearly every block in Japanese cities is a public oven, where, for a small fee, housewives may have their dinners and suppers cooked for them.

"It's hard," said Uncle Eben, "for er man to excuse a boy for bein as foolish at 18 years ob age as he wab bese'f at 25."—Exchange.

SMOCK MARRIAGES.

Instances in Maine of a Custom That Prevailed in England a Century Ago.

A Bangor lawyer attending court in the ancient town of Wincosset, Me., went rummaging recently in the colonial court records of the place and in the course of his reading ran across the official registration of a "smock marriage." Not knowing what sort of marriage that was he looked further and got considerable light upon a custom that prevailed in England a century or two ago and also to some extent in the American colonies.

Smock marriages were weddings where the bride appeared dressed in a white sheet or chemise. The reason of such a garb was the belief that if a man married a woman who was in debt he could be held liable for her indebtedness if he received her with any of her property, and also that if a woman married a man who was in debt his creditors could not take her property to satisfy their claims if he received nothing from her. In England, says an antiquarian, there was at least one case where the bride was clothed puris naturalibus while the ceremony was being performed in the great church at Birmingham. The minister at first refused to perform the ceremony, but finding nothing in the rubric that would excuse him he married the pair.

To carry out the law fully as the people understood it the ceremony should always have been performed as it was in the Birmingham church. But modestly forbidding, various expedients were used to accomplish the desired purpose and yet avoid the undesirable features. Sometimes the bride stood in a closet and put her hand through a hole in the door. Sometimes she stood behind a cloth screen and put her hand out at one side, again she would about her a white sheet furnished for the purpose by the bridegroom, and sometimes she stood in her chemise or smock. Eventually, in Essex county at least, all immodesty was avoided by the bridegroom's furnishing to the bride all the clothes she wore, retaining title to the same in himself. This he did in the presence of witnesses, that he might prove the fact in case he was sued for any debts she might have contracted. A marriage of this kind occurred at Bradford in 1733, and the following is a true copy of the record of the same:

BRADFORD, Dec. 26, 1733. This day certifies whomever it may concern that James Bailey of Bradford who was married to the widow Mary Hanson Nov. 2, last past by me as subscriber then declared that he took the said person without anything of estate and that he did the wife of Esmer Barkum & Mary the wife of Thomas Kichney & Margaret the wife of Caleb Barkum all of Bradford were witnesses that the clothes she then had on were of his providing & bestowing upon her.

WILLIAM DALCH, Minister of ye Gospel. It is noted by the same writer that in all cases of smock marriages that have come to his knowledge the brides have been widows.

It is thought that during the reign of George III there were many smock marriages in Maine, then a part of the province of Massachusetts Bay, chiefly in Lincoln and York counties or in the territory which is now so known. There is nothing to show that the practice outlived the Revolution. In Maine up to 1852 a husband was liable for debts of his wife contracted before marriage, and no such subterfuge as the smock marriage could relieve him.—New York Sun.

CURIOUS STATISTICS.

What a Healthy Man Consumes in Seventy Years of Life.

Taken all in all, a healthy man with a good appetite and moderate thirst consumes in 70 years 90 1/2 tons of solid and liquid foods. If the consumer weighs, say, 150 pounds, he will eat and drink during his lifetime 1,280 times his own weight. Transforming all this foodstuff into mechanical labor, the strength derived would be sufficient to lift 87,600,000 tons one foot from the ground or to raise the Forth bridge at Edinburgh, which weighs 264,600,000 pounds, to a height of 1,325 feet.

Excluding the first 20 years of a lifetime, the quantity of cigarettes consumed by a regular smoker who smokes a dozen every day would in 50 years reach the number of 210,000, or a monster rolled cigarette more than 16 feet in length and about 5 feet thick, beside which the tallest man would resemble a veritable dwarf. A cigar smoker consuming six of his favorite brand a day would during his lifetime smoke a gigantic cigar of more than 16 feet long and almost 2 1/2 feet thick. It would weigh 4,419 pounds and would take the suction power of a steam engine to puff it.

As the smoking habit is not necessary to existence it is easily seen how much money a smoker wastes in the course of years. A pipe smoker consumes in his lifetime a half ton of tobacco.—New York Herald.

The Cave Dweller as an Artist.

We must remember that there are no such things as lines in nature. Whether we use them to represent a human profile, the depth of a shadow, the darkness of a cloak or a thunderbolt, they are mere conventional symbols. They were invented a long time ago by a distinguished sportsman who was also a heaven born amateur artist—the John Leech of his day—who engraved for us (from life) the picture of a mammoth on one of its own tusks. And we have accepted them ever since as the cheapest and simplest way of interpreting in black and white for the wood engraver.—George du Maurier in Harper's Magazine.

The Muscle That He Found on a Necktie.

"The other day," said a young technician, "I received as a gift a necktie marked across one end of the white satin lining of which I found a bar of muscle. I don't read music myself, but I took this to somebody that does, and what do you think it was? 'Beet be the tin that binds!' I thought that was pretty slick, shi!"—New York Sun.



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