



CAMEO KIRBY

BY BOOTH TARKINGTON AND HARRY LEON WILSON
NOVELIZED FROM THE PLAY BY W.B.M. FERGUSON



[CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER III.

COLONEL JACQUES GASPARD DESCHAMPS MOREAU, to give him his full title, doing all things thoroughly, as befitted one of his honorable character, was not satisfied with, as he thought, disposing of Kirby's physical existence, but considered it his pleasurable duty to effectually ruin whatever little reputation had survived during the other's downward career.

Kirby, presumably fatally wounded, had been carried ashore by Buncie at the next landing, and, in those days shooting and stabbing affairs emanating from card games being only too common, but little attention had been paid to the affair. Cameo Kirby was notorious the length of the river, and such an abrupt and tragic termination of his career had not only been frequently and cheerfully predicted, but was, moreover, expected of all such members as graced his questionable profession. Indeed, for them a sober and respectable death would have been considered had form. Among the gambling profession there existed a certain code, which in a manner served to link those at the top, who, like Kirby and Buncie, wooed fortune honestly, to the Moreau type, gracing and disgracing the lowest rung in the gamblers' social ladder. This code, if so it may be termed, was an understanding to the effect that in no instance, however great the provocation, should the law be invoked. Wrongs, fancied or authentic, were to be redressed solely by the bearers thereof, the joint office of judge and executioner being vested in each separate and distinct individual.

In view of this accepted understanding, Larkin Buncie had accordingly made no mention of the fact that a probable murder had been committed, and the passengers and steamship officials dismissing it as a gamblers' quarrel, which was none of their affair, no stigma or notoriety was attached to the good Colonel Moreau, who, claiming to be an old and valued friend of Mr. Randall, had gone to the latter's stateroom and brazenly assumed charge of the body. Buncie's laconic statement was too pitifully true, for the old planter had effectually ended his life.

Again referring to Colonel Moreau's happy faculty of doing all things well, it was quite characteristic that to complete his revenge against Cameo Kirby he now did not hesitate to assume charge of Mr. Randall's body, did not hesitate to meet the son of the man for whose death he had been directly and shamefully responsible, for young Tom Randall had ridden over to the Plaquemine landing in order to greet his father, while over at the old homestead all was bustle and excitement in honor of the master's homecoming.

Anxiously Tom Randall waited to see the jovial and well known figure of his father march down the gangplank, waited to catch a glimpse of the familiar and weather beateu green portmanteau which the planter always carried. The moments passed. Other and numerous passengers stepped ashore, to be eagerly welcomed and claimed by their own, but John Randall was not among them. A curious and seemingly pregnant hush had succeeded the landing of the freight, and off somewhere in the darkness a child whimpered shrilly. The boy's nerves were set on edge. Perhaps his father was having a farewell talk with the captain and would come dashing out at the last moment with all his old disregard for time and place. It was time the bell was clanging, the signal for backing away, for by now the landing of passengers and freight appeared to be terminated. And still no John Randall. The boy walked along the string-

piece until the Texas deck came like more prominently into view, the glow from the open windows of the port staterooms silhouetting the lean visaged pilot, absolute monarch of his realm, who now that an easy stretch of the river had been entered loafed about while his cub took the wheel.

"Hello, on board the Shotwell!" shouted young Randall, looking up at the pilot-house. "Is that you, Mr. Bixby? This is Tom Randall. Do you know if my father is on board? We were expecting him by your boat, sir."

For reply Mr. Bixby, usually the pattern of courtesy, offered a memorysyllabic affirmative and turned from the window.

But young Randall had no time to nurse his quick resentment, for now,

at last, his father had come ashore, borne on the shoulders of two roustabouts, while the captain and officers stood with bared heads and thankfully left the unwelcome task of explaining the tragedy to the amiable and willing Colonel Moreau.

"My boy," said the latter, now laying a fatherly hand on young Randall's heaving shoulder, "although I am a stranger to you, suh, I have ventured to assume temporary control of this terrible affair, for I am a southern gentleman, as was Mr. Randall, and I feel bound to yob all by the ties of sympathy and country. I was a witness, suh, to the events which preceded and prompted this outrage, and, although I am aware it is but yob satisfaction, still it is something to know that the scoundrel who was instrumental in causing yob father's death has already paid for it with his life. My name, suh, is Colonel Moreau, and if I can be of any further service to yob all in this dark hour of tribulation pray command me, suh. As an old soldier I beg of yob to meet this calamity with the fortitude of a Christian gentleman," with which admirable and pious adjuration the good colonel furnished his handkerchief and helped himself to a generous pinch of snuff.

"I-I thank you, Colonel Moreau, for all you have done," said young Randall stonily, looking on the huddled thing at his feet. "You—you say you witnessed my father's death?"

"Not exactly, suh, for he shot himself in his stateroom. However hard to bear, I think yob should know who and what prompted his death. The scoundrel, suh, was the notorious Cameo Kirby, of whom, perhaps, yob have heard."

Young Randall nodded dully, and Moreau, entering into the spirit of the tale, continued: "I formed an acquaint-

ance, suh, with yob father when he came aboard at New Orleans. He confided to every one that he had sold his sugar crop for ten thousand and had the cash with him, and he was on his way back home to see his children. Poh gentleman! As delicately as I can I must state that he was not quite himself, and by that, suh, I mean that he had been imbibing a little too freely. I don't have to tell yob, suh, that there are certain characters on all the big boats who keep a pretty sharp lookout for gentlemen with money who are in the condition yob father, suh, was in tonight, and I expect there was more than one river gambler on board who would have liked to get his hands on Mr. Randall. But the one who got him was the slickest and cleverest of the lot, the Cameo Kirby whom I have mentioned. This rascal, suh, inveigled yob father into a private stateroom, pilled him with mol liquor and won from him not only all his money and personal effects—even including a miniature of yob dear mother, suh—but also a deed to his entire plantation and all his slaves, every thing which he owned. I was too late to save Mr. Randall, but I knew Kirby by repute, and I was so screamingly outraged by the whole affair that I denounced him for the low scoundrel he was. Thereupon he drew on me, but I was the quicker and shot him down like a dog. They carried him ashore, suh, at the landing below this, and the river is cleaner for his death."



"THE SCOUNDREL HAS ALREADY PAID FOR IT WITH HIS LIFE."

"No, no, my boy," interrupted Moreau, again employing his fatherly hand. "I am sensible of the honor, but I couldn't think of it. This is a time when yob all must wish to be alone, and business calls me north. I merely stepped ashore in yob interests as any gentleman would have done. There goes the bell, and I must run for it. Honored, suh, to have made yob acquaintance, though of course I deeply deplore the necessity which occasioned it. I will venture to pay my respects to yob family when I return south, and pray command me in any occasion yob may have. Yob servant, suh." And with a magnificent bow the colonel turned and raced for the gangplank, boarding the Shotwell with a leap that shamed his fifty odd years.

Meanwhile Cameo Kirby, a bullet through his right lung, was making a desperate battle against death, fighting for the life which he had considered little better than worthless. In his efforts he was materially assisted by the crude but faithful Buncie, his gambling partner, with whom he had played up and down the Mississippi for years. For two weeks this combat raged, Kirby hovering between life and death, but at the end he emerged triumphant as, over the gaming table when the odds were as heavily against him, he had emerged from many a hotly contested conflict.

To those who judged Kirby's character from the evil reports which gossip had spread concerning him and to others who, in their righteous ignorance, considered all gamblers legitimate children of the devil his remarkable recovery would have been accepted merely as another proof that the evil one favors his own, that the mills of the gods grind slow, that justice is blind and that a scoundrel is difficult to kill, together with many similar ancient and redoubtable maxims which ignorance and self righteousness love to

distribute on every fitting occasion.

Among possessors of the last mentioned attribute Eugene Kirby was regarded as a black sheep who, religiously avoiding the whitewash brush, was deemed beyond redemption, for what man worthy of the name would have acted as had the last of the Kirbys? What if he had been but fifteen when his father died a bankrupt? What if he had been left an orphan, a pauper, with no immediate relative to care how he acted? Wasn't the heritage of an ancient and honorable name, the knowledge that some of the oldest and best blood in all the south flowed in his veins, enough to keep him straight? Most assuredly it was. There was absolutely no excuse for his drifting in with wild and dissolute companions, becoming a common river gambler and rendering notorious and obnoxious a name which had hitherto been the synonym for honor and integrity.

Kirby had been kept in ignorance of Mr. Randall's suicide, but when at length he became convalescent Larkin Buncie, harking back to the events of that memorable night, informed him, and the invalid, on his part, recounted the occurrences preceding Colonel Moreau's precipitation of the "honorable" combat.

"The news of Mr. Randall's death is a great shock," he added, greatly moved. "He was my father's friend. Buncie, and when the devil played havoc with our affairs did all in his power to be of assistance. But for

"You have taken vengeance out of my hands," said young Randall unsteadily. "The coward and villain! For a stranger, sir, the attitude which you have displayed toward my family has been most considerate, and I will never forget it. The—hospitality of a house in mourning!"

"I'll scare up a prayer or two for Jack Moreau's soul."

My great pride I would have accepted his offer of guardianship and, under his supervision, I hope, would have been a credit to the name instead of the disgrace I am."

"Now, you quit these postmortems," remonstrated Buncie good naturedly, but firmly. "You don't call me a disgrace, do you? And ain't I your old side partner? Bosh, if you play the game straight I guess there's lots of worse ways of making a living than gambling. The sawbones said a lot of rest was coming your way, so just turn over on the other side and forget it."

"No, I can't, Buncie. Don't you realize the position in which I am placed by Mr. Randall's death? I hold a deed to his entire plantation, and I must sign a release without delay. What if it should ever be thought that I entered the game in earnest, with the deliberate intention of robbing Mr. Randall? You know my reputation," he added bitterly, "and how easy it is for a dog to earn a bad name. Bring me pen and ink at once, Larkin, if you please, for I won't have a moment's peace until I sign that paper."

Propped up on the pillows and supported by the still grumbling Buncie, he wrote the following:

I hereby surrender the absolute possession of all the property herein described to the child or children of John Randall.

EUGENE KIRBY.

"There!" he exclaimed. "Now I feel better, and there is no chance of my old neighbor's children being defrauded out of their inheritance."

"You worry a heap more about them than yourself," observed Buncie, "and there's no call for it. Even if they knew you had got this deed you're reckoned as a dead man by everybody. I heard from one of the boys that Moreau had skipped to Mexico, but you know how the river calls, and he'll answer sooner or later. When the time old backo does return don't be fool enough to give him another chance at your back, for he's a painfully modest cuss and prefers to stay in the rear. By rights he ought to get the same dose he gave you, and I'd do it for the asking."

"You know you wouldn't," said Kirby.

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by simply. "The moment I learn that Moreau has returned you may arrange a meeting for us. You can leave the rest to me."

Buncie nodded. "I guess there ain't any one who could get the better of you, Gene, face to face. I ain't much of a hand at the gospel, but I'll scare up a prayer or two for Jack Moreau's soul."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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Respond to Blue Eyes.

"Every little while physiologists come to the front with some advantage accruing to people who have blue eyes," said the city salesman. "Well, I discovered a point that they have never mentioned. A jeweler told me. He is manager of the jewelry department of a big store. I applied to him for a situation for my wife's cousin.

"What's the color of her eyes?" he asked.

"Brown," I said.

"Bring her down and I will take a look at her," he said, "but I am afraid she won't do. People with a certain shade of blue eyes make the best jewelry salesmen. Many customers who buy jewelry want some one to try it on so they can get the effect of the stones when worn. There is something about deep blue eyes that brings out the best lights in most jewels. Take notice and you will find that two-thirds of the jewelry salesmen in New York have blue eyes."—New York Times.

Stingy Queen Bess.

Every one who ever did anything for Queen Bess seems to have been left with a bad debt on his books. So we find an unfortunate John Conley writing to Sir Robert Cecil that for the last two years he had been sulter for £100 for "beeves for the army" and complaining that "unless some order be taken I shall be undone." Sir Edward Hastings, after spending his life in serving the queen, had to pawn his wife's jewels and beg her majesty "to bestow something upon me in this my latter age." So badly was the feet that beat the armada provisioned that Francis Drake had to seize at Plymouth ninety bags of rice, and the unfortunate owner, after ten years' waiting, was refused payment, "rice being an extraordinary victual not allowed for the navy." Nor did common soldiers fare better. The chief anxiety of all Elizabeth's ministers ought, in her view, to have been how to save most money.—London Telegraph.

Eating for the Love of It.

Pawlow has given epicureanism in eating strong scientific support, and many of Horace Fletcher's ideas find orthodox justification. The first rule of dietetic conduct, according to Fletcher, is to eat only when one is hungry and to eat only the things from which one anticipates enjoyment. He also teaches that one must eat in the way that gives the greatest sensual pleasure—that is, by thorough chewing and tasting; also serenity of mind, pleasant surroundings at a meal, congenial friends, pleasurable conversation—in fact, everything that adds to enjoyment aids digestion. In other words, the process of digestion furnishes a beautiful illustration of the influence of mind upon matter. The inspiring stimulus is not mechanical, but psychic. The preliminary essential to the orderly assimilation of food is the keen desire for it.—McClure's Magazine.

A Paradoxical River.

On the African shore, near the gulf of Aden and connecting the lake of Assal with the main ocean, may be found one of the most wonderful rivers in the world. This curiosity does not flow to but from the ocean toward inland. The surface of Lake Assal itself is nearly 700 feet below the mean tide, and it is fed by this paradoxical river, which is about twenty-two miles in length. It is highly probable that the whole basin which the lagoon partly fills was once an arm of the sea which became separated therefrom by the dining of loose sand. The inflowing river has a limited volume, being fullest, of course, at high tide, and has filled the basin to such an extent that evaporation and supply exactly balance each other.

An Even Score.

"What is your objection to him, papa?"

"Why, the fellow can't make enough money to support you."

"But neither can you."

No Use For Theory.

Wigwag—it is a pet theory of mine that two can live as cheaply as one. Youngpop—Hus! It's plain to be seen you were never the father of twins.—Philadelphia Record.

In a Maori Wooing House.

Among the Maoris sometimes in the whare matato (the wooing house), a building in which the young of both sexes assembled for play, songs, dances, etc., there would be at stated times a meeting. When the fires burned low a girl would stand up in the dark and say: "I love So-and-so. I want him for my husband." If he coughed (sign of assent) or said "Yes!" it was well; if only dead silence, she covered her head with her robe and was ashamed. This was not often, as she generally had managed to ascertain either by her own inquiry or by sending a girl friend if the proposal was acceptable. On the other hand, sometimes a mother would attend and say, "I want So-and-so for my son." If not acceptable there was generally mocking, and she was told to let the young people have their house (the wooing house) to themselves.

Pepsy and the Comet.

On Dec. 21, 1904, Pepsy, the diarist, records, "My Lord Sandwich this day writes me word that he hath seen at Portsmouth the comet and says it is the most extraordinary thing he ever saw." Again, three days later, he writes, "Having sat up all night till past 2 o'clock this morning, our porter, being appointed, comes and tells us that the belman tells him that the star is seen upon Tower hill, so I and my boy to Tower hill, it being a most fine bright moonlight night and a great frost, but no comet to be seen." Later the same day, however, Pepsy did see the comet, "which now, whether worn away or no, I know not, appears not with a tail, but only is larger and duller than any other star."—Westminster Gazette.

Education.

What sculpture is to a block of marble education is to a human soul. The philosopher, the saint and the hero, the wise, the good and the great man very often lie hid and concealed in a plebeian, which a proper education might have disinterred and brought to light.—Addison.

Shakespeare's Handicap.

Mrs. Montgomery Smythe—And what were you reading when I came in, my dear? Shakespeare! Ah! What a wonderful man! And to think that he wasn't exactly what one would call a gentleman!—London Punch.

His Maternal Grandma.

A devoted father after a day's absence was met by his two little sons. "Have you been good boys?" Silence. "Have you been good boys?" "No, papa; I called grandma a bad word," said five-year-old, turning scarlet.

Is It Possible?

What did you call your grandpa?" "I called her a human being."

The father, with a mighty effort, maintained his gravity and closed the scene decorously. "I must forgive you for once, but remember if you ever call your grandmother a human being again I shall have to spank you."

Stated a Fact.

"Do you see the horizon yonder where the sky seems to meet the earth?"

"Yes, uncle."

"Boy, I have journeyed so near there that I couldn't put a sispeuce between my head and the sky."

"Oh, uncle, what a whopper!"

"It's a fact, my lad. I hadn't one to put."—Pearson's Weekly.

An Unnecessary System.

"You ought to have a burglar alarm system in your house," said the electrical supply agent, "so that you will be awakened if a burglar raises one of the windows or opens a door at night."

"No burglar can get in here while we are peacefully sleeping," replied Mr. Newpop. "We are wearing our baby."—Chicago Record Herald.

Notable Exceptions.

Mrs. Broombumper—Yes, everybody is always ready to give advice. Broombumper—There are exceptions. "Are there?"

"Yes; doctors and lawyers."

The Lessons of Life are Lost if They Do Not Impress us with the Necessity of Making ample Allowances for the Limiting conclusions of others.

A Wild Blizzard Raging.

brings danger, suffering—often death—to thousands who take colds, coughs and influenza—that terror of winter and spring. Its danger signals are "stuffed up" nostrils, lower part of nose sore, chills and fever, pain in back of head, and a throat-grinding cough. When grip attacks, as you value your life, don't delay getting Dr. King's New Discovery. "One bottle cured me," writes A. L. Dunn, of Pine Valley, Miss., after being "hid up" three weeks with Grip. "For sore lungs, hemorrhages, coughs, colds, whooping cough, bronchitis, asthma, it's supreme. 50c, \$1. Guaranteed by all druggists."

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The Extremes.
"Let's see, we sometimes call a man a Jonah, don't we?"
"Yes, when he brings disaster."
"That's the funny thing about it. The original Jonah was a prophet, while the modern Jonah is a loss."—Boston Transcript.

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