

## A LONESOME WHITE CHIP

NO. 18'S LUCK WITH A CHUBBY-FACED MAN AT FARO.

An Oversight That Influenced Two Careers and Nearly Broke a Gambling-House Keeper—Strange Effects of Thirst and Gaming in Combination.

'The gambling bug,' remarked No 18 of the Harlem Club of Former Alcoholic Degenerates, 'is a buzzer proposition than either rum or dope. It develops wheels within wheels under the hat. It's a hard bug to shake off. It belongs to the clinch variety, and its a stayer from No Man's Land. It generates the fever and then the cold sweat. Pretty often it raps a man's nerve and breaks his heart. Take the horse bug, for example. A man who lets the horse bug get into his lid isn't fit for work. He eats drinks and dreams horse. I had such a big horse bug once that I dreamed every night of some skate or other that was inevitably beaten a lap for third money. The way I worked in my dreams to get those plugs I was riding over the plate among the first three is a bother to think of now. I was going to say, in mentioning work, that a man with the rum bug alone can make a bluff at holding down his job. It comes hard work, after a swit night; yet the practised rummerino goes at it and gets through with it somehow. But the man with a mature, healthy horse bug can't work at all. He wants to know how they are running, if his picks are going through. He hankers to see 'em chafing to get away from the pump and the 'They're off!' shout is the sweetest music he knows. There are plenty of pinheads in this town to day who, long ago smashed and put out of business through the instrumentality of the horse bug, hung around the poolrooms just to hear the races called off by the operators. When their picks go through they snap their fingers and root as if they stood to win it all back, although they haven't even got a bet down in a ten cent handbook. The horse bug is a lulu as a long distance goer, all right. None of the gambling bugs, in fact, is a mere sprinter. They all last a route.

'Well, when you get the gambling bug in combination with the rum bug, you're in trouble and plenty of it. They play one against the other, and they've got possession. You're never it. You make a winning and rum bug hauls down the pot. You decide to eradicate the gambling bug and let the rum bug play solitaire. When the rum bug gets you going you immediately set out to cultivate another gambling bug. And you're never one, two, three.

'Of the different species of the gambling bug the faro clincher'll take you about as far as any o' 'em. It got me out to Spokane about twelve years ago. I landed there with the last suit and a straw hat, and it pretty chilly at that. I'd been trying to create a booze famine in Denver and put all the Denver banks out of business, and when I fell down on both jobs I turned my face toward the land of the setting sun on a tourist sleeper and pulled up in Spokane, because that was as far as my ticket read. I put the temporary squinch on the rum bug when I got there and picked along at a ten-cent table with the last \$2 had. I ran it up to about \$75 policed myself up and fell into a good job as boss dealer for one of the biggest limit banks in the burg. I worked along there for about three months, s'oughing off, as usual, the \$10 a night that I earned dealing, by trying to whop other banks during the afternoon when the shoestringer come along who nailed me for more than half the bank's roll and got me fired.

'He was a seedy, chubby-faced duck from somewhere back this way, as I judged from his spiel. I had noticed him standing behind the chairs of players for about a week of nights before he got into the game. The way he got in was by plunking a white chip—the whites were \$1—on the king to win. He stood up waiting for the turn without much of a show of interest. The king won and he let it stand. It won four straight times and he let it stand each time. Then he pulled down the bunch and called the turn right. My lookout nodded him to take the seat of a busted player who got up when the box ran out, and the chubby-faced, shabby chap sat down, pulled out an inch of pencil to keep cases and started in to play faro with the pick up he had made off one white. He knew the game and his luck was along with him. Inside of an hour he had traded his five or six tall stacks of whites for \$5 blues out of my rack and he still went on and won. He cashed in when he was about \$400 to the good and went out for a while. When he returned and he had three other fellows along with him, all of them just about as seedy and down-at heel looking as himself. He bought a twenty stack of blues for himself and staked each of his three

friends to a bunch of the same height, which took all of his \$400. They all got seats, and from the moment they sat down they began to wallop me. They were scientific men at bank and all four of them won from the jump. They never copped each other, so that the bank did not benefit any from their differences of opinion on the turns. When they got about \$8,000 of the bank's money inside of two hours play I looked around for the old man intending to ask him to put in another dealer to break the bank's hoodoo. The old man wasn't around however, and so I went on dealing. When they had taken \$8,000 out of the safe—it was then along toward 2 o'clock in the morning—I had a chin with a lookout and we decided to turn the box on them for the night not knowing how the old man would feel over the melting of half his roll.

'It's all off for the night,' said I to the chubby face chap, addressing him as the staker of the four. 'Come around to-morrow night, and pass it in again.'

'Want to give each of us a \$1,000 turn on separate cards in a fresh box for a wind up?' he asked me. A dealer never turns down a coupling chance like that, and I nodded I rifled the boxful, and they put markers down to indicate their respective \$1,000 bets. All four of them won, which put the bank a bit over \$12,000 to the bad.

'Then they cashed in. The chubby faced chap gave each of his three pairs \$2,000, and they passed out, as shabby a looking lot of geezers to have broken the spine of one of the good banks of the boom town as ever I saw.

'The old man didn't turn up that night, but when I and the lookout told him the next morning of the coal mauling we had got the night before he looked black.

'You're both all right,' said he, 'but you're fired. I don't ask men working for me to deal brace or pony, but I can't stand for the worst pair of Jonahs this side of the Big Divide. I pass you both up. Get what's a coming to you from the money devil, and consider yourselves dished.'

'The way the old man took it made me rather hot. I told him so.

'You're a game sport,' said I to him, with the copper on. I don't mind being fired particularly, but to get an unnecessary roast from a man who talks like a sure thinger inflates my chest.

'There was only \$50 or \$60 coming to

me, and when I got hold of it the rum bug came to life and sung me an aria of woe. I pulled out of Spokane that same night with two rear pocket bottles and a ticket for Tacoma, and when I got there I found there was nothing doing. I chubbed off what I had left of my Spokane earnings at a 93-per cent. bank, and then I went to work in a harness shop as bookkeeper for \$12 a week. This wore me out in less than three weeks, and I lent a listening ear again to the sonatas of the rum insect. This landed me at Seattle, and I made a couple of trips from Seattle to Alaska as purser of a boat. I had \$100 when I got back from the last trip and went over to Portland. I took a few there to keep out the Oregon wet, and when I emerged from the two weeks of it I was still being rained upon, and no place to get out of it.

'One night I was walking by one of the garnish ginmills of Portland, wondering if I couldn't work the reliever game and get a bum suit, with about \$2 change, for the one I had on, when a fellow walked out of the rum emporium and happened to get his lamps on me. He was more than the limit in tiggery and general grooming, and the shiny ones in his necktie and on his finger hurt my eyes. I knew him as soon as I saw him, and he knew me.

'Hello, there, 'Spokane,' said he, walking up to me and holding out his mitt. 'You look kind o' beaten out. When did you quit dishing 'em out in Spokane, and why?'

'He was the chubby-faced chap, no longer seedy, who had been the occasion of my losing my job as a dealer in Spokane.

'The old man couldn't stand for your win that time,' I told him, 'and he ditched me next morning.'

'He did, hey?' said the chubby-cheeked duck. 'Well, I'll tell you something. That was like squealing, for he didn't know that he had any cause for dumping you. But he did. Do you remember how I started that night?'

'With a lonesome white chip,' said I, 'I've got blooming good cause to remember it.'

'How 'o you suppose I got that chip?' he asked me.

'Bummed it off some piker, I suppose.' I said to him.

'Not any,' said he. 'I didn't know a man in Spokane, for I didn't have any front there until after I pinned you to the stick. I was just watching the game that



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night, like I had been doing for a week or so, when I noticed that you forgot to pick off a white chip that had been lost on the four. The lookout said something to you when the four came out, and you didn't take the chip down. I asked one of the fellows at the table to pass me that chin on the four, and he did. That's the way I got started on the king play, and the chip that put me in business was the house's. I'm now engaged in the business, exclusively, of cracking banks with the top-price chips, and I'm making it stick, at that.'

'I told him that he looked the part. And as long as you lost your job on my account' he went on. 'It's up to me to make good. Let up first repair within and become exceedingly drunk, and to-morrow I'll stake you.'

'That lasted two weeks, but the chubby-faced chap was unbreakable. He was too much to the good. At the end of the two weeks in Portland can be made as warm as a similar period in any old place on the slope—he emerged with an idea.

'It would be poetic retribution,' he said, 'if he could run down to Spokane and hit the bank of the man who fired you for losing to me. Want to try it?'

'We went down to Spokane that same night and the next night we both turned up in the bank where I had done the dealing. The old man knew me instantly, and smiled sardoniously when I passed him my \$100 for twenty blues. He didn't know the chubby-faced chap, though, for he hadn't been around when the latter had socked it to his bank through me. The best I could do in three nights' play was to cash in for \$1,600, but my friend with the bundle roped the old man's new dealer for four times that much before the box was turned on him by order of the old man, who had got cold feet.

'Then I went down to San Francisco and came around to New York by way of the Panama steamers. I was so darned grateful to land back here, not only with a whole skin, but with a front trimmed with cow bells all over, that I extracted the gambling

## HIS \$1,000 WOULD BUY NOTHING.

So the Hobo Hunted up the True Owner and Was Celebrated.

'I've slept under a shed with the thermometer 'way below zero,' said the tramp, 'and I've gone two long days with nothing to eat, but I'm telling you straight that when I once had \$1,000 in my pocket I was worse off then at any other time I can remember. I had just been let out of the Bridewell in Chicago, and was begging on the streets and being turned down on every hand, when I picked up a \$1,000 bill on the sidewalk. I thought it was a dollar, and you bet I made a hustle to get down a side street. When I dodged into a doorway and made out that I was a thousand dollars ahead of the game the sweat started from every pore and my knees knocked together. I was regularly seasick for ten minutes, and my heart thumped away until I thought it would break out.

'That \$1,000 meant a heap for me, you understand, but I was so excited that it was two hours before I could do any planning. The first thing was to buy a new suit of clothes and I entered a store and picked them out. When I exhibited that 1,000 bill the clothier ran to the door to call a policeman. I got away by a close squeeze, and then I realized the situation. Tramp that I was, I couldn't get it changed at a bank nor use it to make me more comfortable. If it had been a ten I could have had lodgings and a bed, but I'm telling you that I walked the streets as hungry as a shark, and slept at police stations and in lumber yards.

'Under the circumstances the bill might as well have been a piece of brown paper. I tried all sorts of dodges to get it bushed, but it was no go. Every time I showed it I ran the risk of an arrest. I offered a butcher \$1000 to get it changed, but he refused to have anything to do with it. I'd have sold it for half price and been glad to, but there was no such thing as making a deal. Finally in despair, I went to one of the newspaper offices and looked up the advertisements for ten weeks past. The loser had advertised, and I went to his office in a big building and gave up the bill. The reward was \$50, but he counted out \$10 on top of that and said:

'I wouldn't have believed there was such honesty in the world. You could have kept the bill as well as not.'

He took down my name and all that and gave the affair away to the reporters. They wrote me up as the 'Honest Tramp' and had my picture in the papers, but you may guess I didn't enjoy it over much. I had \$60 in place of \$1,000 and as for my honesty, it was all bosh. I returned the bill because I had to, and though I'm hungry and dead broke and don't know where to turn in for the night I'm not looking for any more big lines. Something with a figure "2" on the corner will just fit my vest pocket.'

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