

why he wanted, and not only wanted, but had made up his mind to have—one hundred thousand dollars. He did not remember either his father or his mother. They hadn't had any money, but he had an impression that they had been rather decent people—only they had died. He had been a kid when it happened—he didn't know how old—just a kid. Some one had put him in a school, an orphan school. It had been a hell of a place. And at ten he had run away. After that, beginning by making himself useful around one of the training stables, he had lived on the race courses ever since—and had risen to the heights of becoming Bookie Skarvan's clerl!

His jaws clamped hard. It was a piker life, but here was a chance to get out of it! He had been looking for the chance—and here it was—if he could get away with it. There had been lots of chances before, chances for a few thousand dollars—but the bet hadn't been good enough. He had even a little better than three thousand dollars himself, for that matter, and it was pulling interest, too; he had loaned it to Square John Kelly, who ran the Pacific Coral Saloon down on the Barbary Coast in 'Frisco. And he had a couple of hundred dollars in his pocket now, too, for that matter. But it was all chicken feed. He had won it, and he might win as much more again some time—or he might lose it. The game wasn't any good. It didn't get anywhere. Maybe it was the interest coming in on that three thousand that showed up where the odds stood on a hundred thousand. There wasn't anything else involved. Was it a good gamble? The interest on a hundred thousand would make a blooming gentleman of independent means out of him at one crack. Sure, it was worth the risk! If he got caught, well then—*good-night!* If he got away with it, well then—*zowie!*