"I am not afraid to show my hand," said the gambler, and he put down on the table four aces.

"There's the king of hearts," said Storm, putting it down on the table. "There's the queen of hearts, there's the knave of hearts, there's the ten of hearts. Now," he cried, waving his other card in the air, "can you tell me what this card is?"

"I am sure I don't know," answered the gambler quietly, "probably the nine of hearts."

"It *is* the nine of hearts," shouted Storm, placing it down beside the others.

The gambler quietly picked up the cards, and handed them to the man who was to deal. Storm's hands were trembling with excitement as he pulled the pile of banknotes and gold towards him. He counted out what I had given him, and passed it to me under the table. The rest he thrust into his pocket.

"Come," I said, "It is time to go. Don't strain your luck."

"Another five pounds," he whispered; "sit where you are."

"Nonsense," I said, "another five pounds will certainly mean that you lose everything you have won. Come away, I want to talk with you."

"Another five pounds, I have sworn it."

"Very well, I shall not stay here any longer."

"No, no," he cried eagerly; "sit where you are, sit where you are,"

There was a grim thin smile on the lips of the gambler as this whispered conversation took place.

When the next hand was dealt around and Storm looked at his cards, he gave another gasp of delight. I thought that a poker player should not be so free with his emotions; but of course I said nothing. When it came his time to bet, he planked down a five-pound note on the table. The other two, as was usual, put down their cards. They were evidently very timorous players. The gambler hesitated for a second, then he put a ten-pound note on Storm's five pounds. Storm at once saw him, and raised him ten. The gambler hesitated longer this time, but at last he said, "I shall not bet. What have you got?"

"Do you call me?" asked Storm. "Put up your money if you do"

"No I do not call you."

Storm laughed and threw his cards face up on the table. "I have nothing," he said; "I have bluffed you for once."

"It is very often done," answered the gambler quietly, as Storm drew in his pile of money stuffing it again in his coat pocket. "Your deal, Storm."

"No, sir," said the youg man, rising up; "I'll never touch a poker hand again. I have got my own money back and five or ten pounds over. I know when I've had enough."

Although it was Storm's deal, the gambler had the pack of cards in his hand, idly shuffling them to and fro.

"I have often heard," he said slowly, without raising his eyes, "that when one fool sits down beside another fool at poker, the player has the luck of two fools—but I never believed it before."

MUSIC.

The improvements in the manufacture of musical instruments have not kept pace with those made in other departments of industry. Especially is this the case with the popular or leading instruments the violin and the pianoforte. The improvements in wind instruments, notably the flute, are recognized by the merest amateur. Not so with the pianoforte which has made but little progress since Jonas Chickering of Boston improved on Meyer's idea of a single casting resistance frame some 50 years ago, and the jointly claimed frame and overstrung scale of the Chickering and Steinway, some years afterwards. Improvements to some minor extent have been made in the inter-relations of the sounding-board, the frame and the strings, but the tone of the instrument has not been very perceptibly improved during the present generation. The efforts of the Steinways to prolong the tone by a sort of bell attachment a few years ago failed of much success.

Every note on the pianoforte is "diminuendo." In some respects it is the most imperfect of musical instruments. There is not a perfect fifth in its compass; the best that the tuner can do is to compromise from the lowest to the highest note, or to effect what is known as "tempering" But more of this anon.

In the violin still less improvement has been made. The violin, however, may be termed a perfect instrument. Those of the great Cremona makers who flourished from the middle of the 16th to the close of the first quarter of the 18th century have never been excelled. As we must dwell more at length on this subject later on, we shall close this reference to the king of instruments by noticing one or two slight improvements of quite recent adoption.

The fuller tone of the E and G strings has been discovered to be due to the more direct contact with the face of the instrument. To extend this to the other two strings a bridge of four legs has been introduced and patented by Edwin Bonn of Brading, Isle of Wight, which would seem to accomplish all that is claimed for it by the inventor. The difficulty of closely adapting such a bridge to the rounded surface is obviated by fastening a piece of sand-paper round the narrow part of the violin and rubbing thereon the feet of the upright bridge for a few minutes across and lengthwise till it perfectly agrees with the curvature of the instrument where the bridge should stand. This will facilitate the fitting of the ordinary two-legged bridge also.

The idea long held that the wood for violins should be very old and that the best materials are obtained from old chateaus or churches is combated of late years. The wood employed by the Cremona makers was not over seasoned, and the superior varnish—which, by the way, is not a lost art—preserved the elasticity in the fibres of the wood which is now understood to be more important than mere dryness in the materials.

The London "Strad" makes mention of a clever violinist from Goderich, Ont., a Miss Clinch, and calls her the "Canadian Neruda."

Miss Campbell of Durocher Street, and her sister, highly proficient amateurs respectively on the violin and the pianoforte, are about to visit the art centres of Germany accompanied by Mrs. Campbell who is also a fine performer on the pianoforte.

Gabrielle Wietrowetz is the unmusical name of the best of the new lady violinists of the year. Her principal solos are Spohr's "Dramatic Concerto" and Brahm's beautiful Sonata in G, opus 78. —Miss Ethel Barns is another new star in the musical horizon.

Some times in trying to propel an idea into the consciousness of a foolish man it becomes necessary to explode an extra quantity of the powder of exaggeration. Not to make the projectile reach the mark, but because it will at least make an impression on some one of his senses.

She.—"What's in that bottle?"
He.—"Glycerinum pepticum."
She.—"Don't swear so, Charlie."