

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, AUGUST 26, 1899.

A BIT OF POKER ETHICS.

QUESTION OF CONCESSION PUT BY A KENNY OBSERVER.

An Incident Outside the Game. Told Him What His Opponent Held—His Right to Make Use of the Knowledge—Suspicion Through That He Told a False Tale.

'Let go the anchor,' cried the skipper. 'Four poker hands were slapped down on the cabin table and four land lubbers started in four different directions to obey the order.'

'You're it, Penfield,' said the skipper to the man who came nearest to obeying the orders. 'That is the rope right in front of you.'

Penfield let the anchor drop and the yacht was presently riding quietly.

'Now, see here,' said the skipper, a little man with large inspirations. 'I have put up with you fellows long enough. It is quite evident that you will never learn the name of the different parts of a yacht and I am going to fix things so that you will know at once what I want done and you can obey me in turn instead of all jumping on deck at once.'

Acting on his inspiration, he took a discarded poker deck and fastened a card to each article regarding which he might be obliged to issue an order. Immediately he had an intelligent and servicable crew. When he called out to 'let go the king of clubs' or to 'take in the queen of hearts,' the landlubbers jumped to their proper places like old sea dogs. With this satisfactory arrangement they were able to continue their poker game with but few interruptions. When an order was called one man could attend to it with the others laid their cards on the table and waited, instead of all rushing away in four different directions in the hope that one would be in the right place to perform the required service.

And now that the situation is known, you must get acquainted with the players. Chief of the group was John Bain, millionaire, who once announced in a burst of unusual confidence that he never played for more than a five-dollar ante for when one got above that he was gambling. Of course he looked on any game with a limit on it as merely a showdown and the others in the party suspected that he was showing concession to them when he took a hand in their little dollar limit game. When he played poker the cards occupied a secondary part for he played the men more than anything else. He seldom paid any attention to the cards during the first few rounds but devoted himself to noting how the different players acted when they battered their hands in the draw. He asserted his right to use every fact he could observe in a game of poker and the keenness of his observation was marvellous. It is recorded that on one occasion he met a man with a corporation face who proved to be a worthy foe. By dint of close watching, however, he finally discovered that his rival had one weakness. When he betted his hand although he never changed a muscle of his face or showed the slightest tremor of his well trained voice, the little finger of his left hand twitched perceptibly. Banking on this knowledge, Bain had beaten the other man to a standstill. With such a player in the game it naturally followed that everyone was keyed up to his best; for he smooth, leathery-like face and steel-grey eyes made one feel that the game was presided over by the fates themselves.

The most enthusiastic player was Will Penfield, a young married man who used to tell about his wonderful baby, when they were not playing, and who was enjoying his first outing since his married life began. From his conversation it was easy to see that he was one of the most uxorious of men. His wife knew all about his business and was his chief adviser. The sole reason for his presence in the party was that his wife was still younger and had ideas about allowing a husband a proper amount of freedom. She had urged him to take this holiday and be one of the boys again. He enjoyed himself like a half-broken colt turned out to pasture and kept up enthusiastically the game of Poker which Bain took part in astoundingly. Elkins the third member of the party, need not be especially described for he was one of those self-effacing men who enjoy themselves without the inebriation and may be bored without showing it. He could always be counted on to take a hand in a game of poker whenever and whenever proposed. As for the last member, Smith—he possesses some high-priced information about the game which he would willingly dispose of to

some rich beginner who is nobly blessed with a beginner's luck.

For five days of the cruise they played most of the days and all of the nights without any occurrence, especially exciting. During the daytime, while they were cruising, the skipper stood at the wheel and issued his orders from time to time, from where he sat he could watch the game by looking down into the cabin and could take part in any conversation that took place, during the evenings he naturally took part in the game.

They touched at various towns and club-houses along the Sound and owing to the varying luck of the game had each cashed checks so that they were considerable money in circulation about the yacht. As is usual where a game is kept up continuously the limit became irksome. With only a dollar limit no one could do any bluffing, so when Penfield finally exclaimed: 'Say, fellows, this is the last day of our cruise. Say we wind up with a game of poker that will be really a game. I move that we throw the limit to the fishes,' all agreed and the game proceeded. Penfield was the largest winner, and so the others had no compunctions about letting him into a game that was much too warm for him. They took a fresh deck of cards and began. The skipper interrupted them from time to time, but in spite of that they continued to get more and more interested. The bets continually crept higher. At last there came a jack pot that seemed as if it would never open, and even with the ten cent ante there were several dollars in it. Finally it came to Bain's deal. The cards were dealt to Penfield on his left, Elkins opposite and Smith at his right.

'This pot is worth opening for \$2,' said Penfield, after looking at his cards. The pot was worth opening for much more, and the others all knew that he was only trying to coax them in. Elkins came in but Smith dropped out, for one of the things he had learned in purchasing his knowledge of poker is that a speckled mediocrity which shows neither a pair nor the nucleus of a straight or flush is an excellent thing to throw into the discard. Just as Bain had picked up the deck for the draw the skipper sang out: 'Let go the ace of spades.'

Being the next in rotation for deck service, Smith jumped up to obey the order, saying at the same time:

'Go right ahead, boys; I am not in this. After exclaiming the order Smith returned to his place and found that the game was waxing furious.

'I raise you another hundred,' Penfield was saying, excitedly. 'That let's me out,' said Elkins, throwing down his hand.

By this time there was about \$5000 on the table. The skipper was watching uneasily, for he had no intention of allowing such a game when the cruise began. Still he could say nothing while this pot was under discussion, but from the way he was fidgeting at the wheel it was evident that he intended calling a halt as soon as possible.

'I'll have to go you a hundred better,' said Bain, pushing the money into the pot. Penfield counted the money he had left, found there was not enough, and then drew his check book from his pocket.

'The money I have here, with what is down on the stub of my check book makes \$460. I raise you \$360.'

Bain said nothing, but drew out a freshwad and laid \$360 on the table.

'I have four aces,' exclaimed Penfield, triumphantly.

'No good,' said Bain. 'I have a straight flush,' and he laid down the king, queen, jack, ten and nine of hearts.

Penfield fell back in his chair rigid. It was evident that he had lost all the money he had in the world. He gasped a couple of times and then said involuntarily:

'Good God! What will Elkins say?'

The others said nothing. In a moment Penfield realized that it looked as if he had played the baby and with a forced laugh he pushed the money toward Bain, who had made no move to pick it up.

'Hold on,' said the man of iron, quietly. 'I am not sure that I can honestly take that pot.'

'If you think I am going to do the baby act,' exclaimed Penfield angrily, 'you are mistaken. Take it.'

'It is not that,' said Bain. 'Before I take the pot, I want you fellows to decide a point of honor for me. You know I always declare that I have a right to anything I observe in a game of poker. Well, I made no observation in this game that I feel I had no right to.'

All the other players waited breathlessly.

'By an agreement with our skipper we

were all to stop playing when he called out an order, while one of the party attended to it. Just as Penfield was asking for his draw of two cards the skipper called out: 'Let go the ace of spades.' Penfield involuntarily caught one of the cards in his hand and I knew instantly that he had three aces. I had three kings myself, and knew that he had me beaten. But I also had the jack and queen besides the king of hearts, and I throw away the other two kings. I drew two cards in the hope that I might catch either a straight or flush on the two card draw. As you can see I caught both. Now, I am not sure that I had a right to make use of what I noticed about Penfield's hand, for it was shown to me by something that was outside the game. I leave it to you.'

A moment's consideration sufficed to make the players decide that a man with a keen sense of honor would not permit by such an accident in a gentleman's game, and it was decided to divide the pot.

It was some weeks afterward before the players not directly concerned began to wonder if Bain had really thrown two kings into discard or had simply let Penfield out with a fairy story.

DOGS THAT CATCH FISH.

A Wolf-Like Breed Used by the People of Labrador.

Dogs trained to catch fish are among the features of everyday life on the barren shores of that distant part of Labrador which belongs to Newfoundland. The valuable cod fisheries along the 1,000 miles of Labrador's coast yield about one-fifth of Newfoundland's total catch of cod, and furnish employment annually to thousands of hardy fisher folk. They fish with lines from 150 to 200 fathoms long, two men to a boat, and man using two hand lines. The usual bait is capelin. When fish are plentiful it takes a very short time to fill a boat with cod. A number of the fishermen have trained their dogs to assist them in catching fish.

The rapidity with which the fishermen haul up their long lines when they feel a bite, robs the fish almost entirely of life and breath by the time it reaches the surface of the sea. It comes to the top as completely exhausted as a salmon that has been played by an angler until he can tail it with his hand and so avoid the necessity of gaffing it. It is one thing, however, to bring a heavy cod to the surface of the water and another to get it into the boat. Gaffs and landing nets are unknown to these toilers of the sea. If they can lift the fish into the boat by the line, all is well; but this is often where they fail. If the fish is large and but lightly hooked, as is often the case the hook breaks away from its mouth when the attempt is made to haul it from the water. The fish, still quite inanimate in manner and appearance, floats away from the boat on the surface of the waves. This is only for a moment, however. The fisher's trained dog, often without a signal from his master, leaps over the gunwale of the boat, plunges into the sea, swims after the floating fish and seizes it in his mouth. Returning consciousness, hastened by the new sensation of being taken entirely from the water and firmly gripped between the jaws of its captor, often produces lively struggles on the part of the fish, which add considerably to the difficulty the 'dog has in swimming back with his burden to the boat. The dog rarely releases his hold upon his wriggling captive until safe within the boat.

Sometimes these dogs have larger game than codfish to struggle with in the water. They are trained to plunge into ice-cold water in the spring of the year and to act as retrievers for their masters when seal are shot from the shore on the surface of the sea.

The dogs employed by the fisherman of Newfoundland and Labrador are by no means the specimens of canine magnificence usually known as Newfoundland dogs. They more nearly resemble Eskimo dogs than anything else, and are often quite wolfish in both manner and appearance. It is even believed by many people that the blood of the wild brutes of the forest runs in their veins. At a post near Hamilton Inlet not long ago the door of a house in which an infant was sleeping in a cradle had been left open for a short time during the temporary absence of other members of the family. When the mother re-entered the house she found only the bones of her child. The little one had been completely devoured by the dogs.

The Labrador dogs are excessively quarrelsome, and, wolf-like, always attack the weaker. All seem anxious to take part in the fray, and scarcely a season passes without the settlers losing two or three dogs during the summer from wounds received in quarrels among themselves. Peace is instantly restored even if twenty or more are engaged in the affray, by the sound or even sight, of the dreaded Eskimo whip used by the Labradorians. These people have seldom succeeded in raising any other domesticated animal on the coast; cats, cows, and pigs have all been destroyed by the dogs. If ever a dog is brought up in the house, his doom is sealed. At the first opportunity, the others will pounce upon him in the absence of his master and worry him to death. This is the invariable fate of any privileged dog on the coast that is permitted to enter his master's house and to receive the caresses of the different members of the family. The preference excites the deepest jealousy in the breasts of the Labrador dogs and they patiently wait for an occasion to avenge themselves.

In the winter these animals will drag a commettique, or sleigh, fifty or sixty miles a day over the snow. They haul wood from the interior, carry supplies to hunters in the forest far back from the rocky and desolate coasts; merrily draw their masters from house to house, and with their wonderful noses pick out the right path even in the most pitiless storm. If the traveller will only trust to the sagacity of an experienced leader, he may wrap himself up in his bear and seal skin robes and, regardless of piercing winds and blinding snowdrifts, these sagacious and faithful animals will draw him securely to his own door or to his nearest post. The commettique is about thirty inches broad and ten or twelve feet long. The runners are shod with whalebone, which by friction over the snow, soon becomes beautifully polished and looks like ivory. The commettique is well floored with seal skins over which bear or seal skins are nailed all round, with an opening for the traveller to introduce his body. The harness is made of seal skin; the foremost dog, called the guide, is placed about thirty feet in advance, the others are ranged in pairs behind the guide. Sometimes three, sometimes four pairs of dogs are thus attached to one commettique, besides the guide.

The Eskimo dog of pure breed, with his strongly-built frame long white fur, pointed ears and bushy tail, is capable of enduring hunger to a far greater extent than the mixed breed. But the latter beats him in long journeys, even when fed but once a day. An Eskimo dog will travel for two days without food; one of the mixed breed must be fed at the close of the first day, or he is good for little the next. In the winter their food often consists chiefly of dried capelin—the small smelt-like fish used by the cod fishermen for bait. An expert driver can hit any part of the leading dog he chooses with the extremity of his formidable whip.

AT THE HOISTING OF A SAFE.

How the Danger Signs on the Sidewalk Were Regarded by the Passerby.

On the sidewalk in a downtown business street, in front of a building into an upper story of which men are hoisting a safe from a truck standing by the curb, there were two blocks of wood, in each of which, sunk into the wood as a hatchet might have been but with only a corner sticking into it, so that it stood at an angle, was a flat piece of heavy sheet iron, maybe a foot and half long and half as wide, marked on each side with red paint. "Danger." To warn passerby. Almost without exception the people who came along saw the signs, and in a majority of cases those who spied them looked up to see what danger they indicated. They saw the safe, which was in this instance a pretty big one.

This was a locality where there were many passers-by, only a small proportion women; but the first persons that saw the signs, on the sidewalk and stepped off into the street before they came to them and walked around the truck, then to step upon the sidewalk again, were two women in quick succession. For a time that is to say a minute or so during which a considerable number of men passed, nobody else stepped off into the street and it seemed as though perhaps the two women would be the only persons to take precaution on seeing the signs; but presently a man off the curb and walked around the truck to step up again on the other side of it, and in the course of five minutes, in which time, at a rough estimate 150 people passed, four men stepped out and walked around. In two or three other cases men who came along and saw the signs stepped down before actually coming to them, as though they were going around as the others had done; but in these cases the men kept on diagonally across the street. There was one man of those who passed along on the walk who, seeing the signs and looking up, started and ran past the building, but he didn't run very fast,

and it seemed, somehow, as though he were doing this because it was a duty—because he owed it to himself not to take any unnecessary risk. But though of them the greater number looked up and saw the safe the great majority of those who passed along walked on calmly and without any acceleration of pace.

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A ONE-HOUR BATTERY.

No Harm was Done but the gun was Condemned.

The celebrated one-mule two-gun battery projected by Lieutenant Darby ('John Phoenix') is remembered by military men. It consisted of one mule and two small howitzers one of which was mounted on the mule's back, pointing backward over his tail, while the other was slung under his stomach, the muzzle pointing between his fore legs. The mule was first to be placed with his tail to the enemy, and the gun on his back fired. The recoil was expected to turn him completely over in a somersault, so that he would come down with his head presented to the enemy. The lower gun was then to be fired, once more reversing the mule. The guns were then to be reloaded, and the process continued as long as should be necessary.

The advantage of this battery seem to have suggested themselves to Gen. Sir Henry Brackenbury of the British ordnance department, if a story told in the clubs and by a British exchange is true.

Sir Henry made a test at Woolwich of a gun designed to be fired from a horse's back. The horse's head was tied to a post, the muzzle of the gun being directed toward an earthen butt. The general and his staff stood on the other side of the animal to watch the result.

The gun was loaded, and in order to afford time, a slow burning fuse was used to fire it off. Unfortunately the animal was only fastened by the head. The result was that when it heard the fizzing of the fuse on its back, it became uneasy and commenced prancing round the post so that the gun instead of pointing at the butt, was directed straight at the heads of Sir Henry and the gorgeously attired generals and staff officers with him, who had assembled to watch the experiment.

Not a moment was to be lost. Down they all went flat on their stomachs in the mud. Then the gun went off, the recoil knocking over the horse, which was found at some distance from the post on its back.

It was a miracle that no harm was done by the projectile. The officers received no injury except to their uniforms. They presented a rather demoralized appearance when the experiment was over, and they reported unanimously against the adoption of the gun.

New Jersey "Eare Marks."

A history of Middletown, New Jersey, recently printed, contains some curious revelations of life in the editorial period. Middletown in the early days was prosperous and contented, living at peace with the Indians and with all the world—except the wolves, which were apparently the only enemies of the town; but the wolves made necessary this town ordinance:

'Concerning wolves it is ordered that if any one shall kill a wolfe he shall have twenty schillings for his pains all see if any Indian shall kill a wolfe and bring the head to the constable: The Indian so doing shall have for his reward Twenty gilders provided it can be discerned that it killed within ten miles of the towne.'

However, the town had less trouble with the wolves than it had over the wandering of its domestic animals. As the pigs and cattle were bound to become more or less mixed up, and as it was necessary that the marks used by every owner should be known and recognized, it became the custom for the town fathers to authorize and record those marks. Such curious statements as the following abound, therefore, in the Middletown records:

Mr. Thomas Sennell's Eare Marks is a Round Hoole in Each Eare.'

John Holmes his Eare Marke is a hole in the left Eare which was formerly John Hawkes.'

But They Have No Reason.

'What are you doing, Thomas?' asked the father of a young man who sat dreamily gazing into space.

'Building air castles, father,' replied the visionary youth.

'Quit it, my boy, quit it,' said the old man. 'You can't mortgage structures of that kind for a cent.'—Chicago News.

Descriptive Reading.

'I'm in trouble again,' said the new reporter. 'Here's a story of a debate at the Deaf and Dumb Institute. What head shall I put on it?'

'That's easy,' suggested the sub-editor. 'Make it "Head to Head Contest."'