

A GAMBLING DEVICE

By JAMES B. BRICE

Spaniards are natural gamblers. In Mexico the little boys constantly play for coppers on the streets, and from them up to the wealthiest there is one continued chain of hazard. During the railroad building that started in that republic some years ago I was employed as an engineer on one of them and had an opportunity to witness this and other Mexican characteristics.

There were railroad followers who preyed upon the workmen, taking especial care to be on hand when pay day came round. On an evening of one of these pay days I went into a tent where I had seen one of my men go, a young Mexican whom I employed for an axman. I was interested in him, for I knew that he had a wife and some babies who kept pace with him as he passed from one end of the line to the other, for in Mexico there are persons who have no homes, sleeping in the open air, father, mother, children and dog, huddled together to keep one another warm.

Manuel—that was my axman's name—was in the tent seated before a table shaking dice with the man who owned the outfit. There were several other workmen in the place who had within a few minutes been cleaned out of the pay they had that day received. I stood looking on. Quite likely had I not been there the proprietor would have made short work of Manuel; but, seeing me, he put off the depouement, permitting the axman to get a little ahead.

But I soon noticed that whenever it was for the axman's interest that the dice should fall with large numbers up they invariably did so. In short it looked to me that he had some power over the dice to make them fall as he wished. Manuel's pay was very small, and he had not much to lose. While he was playing, a little woman, rather pretty, came in with a baby in her arms and stood over him. He looked up at her, and I felt sure she was his wife. She had not come there to get him away. She was as infatuated as he.

Doubtless she had been living with her little one for weeks in this way, he losing his weekly wages every Saturday night, both expecting that the day would come when they would have a run of luck and win enough money to go to a bullfight.

After she came in the proprietor let Manuel win a little. The gambler was afraid that I might exert influence to have him sent away, so he did every thing temporarily to favor his victim. I confess I was more interested in the dice than the victim. If they were simply "loaded" he could not manipulate them as he did, they would always roll high. At least it was my opinion that no skill in throwing would avert this. It occurred to me that the gambler had some way of controlling the dice that was not visible.

Living in scientific times, I was not long in forming a theory. There must be some electric connection between him and the dice. Then I brought myself a pocket compass which I always carried and which I continually needed in my out of door work. Taking position back of the gambler, where he would not see me, I took out my compass and looked at it.

The needle vibrated violently. My theory was confirmed. There must be a magnet somewhere near the dice. I looked under the table. It dogged four legs, and in its center was a box attached to the underside. So far so good. That box contained the magnet.

That I felt sure of, I knew very well that by attaching a metal plate to one side of a die and rolling the die above the magnet while the current was on the metal face would be held to the table, leaving its opposite face up. If there was no current on the dice would roll by chance. Sometimes the current was on, sometimes it was not.

I now brought my watchfulness to bear upon the gambler's movements. I noticed that every time he threw high there was a slight movement of his right leg. The leg was not readily seen, being under the table, but I was interested and did my best to see. I was convinced that attached to the leg of the table was an electric key and that when he pressed his leg against the key the current was turned on.

So absorbed was I in my puzzle that I failed to notice that Manuel had but a few coppers left when I had reached my conclusion. I whispered to him to go to the chief engineer's office and ask him to send me a few men. While he was gone I sat down at the table to play till he came back. On his return with the men I lifted the top off the table and exposed a magnet and a dry battery just where I expected. Attached to the table leg was the key.

I ordered the gambler to return the money he had won from Manuel and the others and to get away from our vicinity as soon as possible or I would have him locked up. He returned the funds, and I saw him no more.

But, alas! When the next pay day came around I saw Manuel, accompanied by his wife, she carrying the baby, making straight for a similar tent, where he soon got rid of his week's earnings.

But I concluded to waste no more time on a family in whom the gambling spirit had taken so strong a hold that it could not be eradicated.

A Delicate Bit of Work.
To transfer an old oil painting to a new canvas is a branch of art that calls for a union of mechanical skill and talent. There are not many men in the business. It is an entirely distinct work from renovating a cracked or mutilated painting. Transferring a painting from an old canvas to a new one requires years of experience to accomplish the simplest part of it. After the picture has been removed from its frame several layers of fine tissue paper are pasted firmly across the surface. When the paper is dry the back of the canvas is made thoroughly wet. Thread by thread it is picked away until nothing remains but the paint, which is fast to the tissue paper. A new canvas is then mounted and glued to the back of the picture. When the glue is dry the tissue paper is moistened and gently removed from the surface. A little cleaning and retouching by a skilled hand make the work complete.

What There is in One Ton of Coal.
From one ton of ordinary gas coal may be produced 1,500 pounds of coke, 20 gallons of ammonia water and 140 pounds of coal tar. By distillation the coal tar will yield 60.6 pounds of pitch, 17 pounds of creosote, 14 pounds of heavy oils, 9.5 pounds of naphtha yellow, 0.3 pounds of naphthalene, 4.76 pounds naphthol, 2.25 pounds alizarin, 2.4 pounds solvent naphtha, 1.5 pounds phenol, 1.2 pounds aurine, 1.1 pounds benzine, 1.1 pounds aniline, 0.77 of a pound toluidine, 0.46 of a pound of anthracene and 0.3 of a pound toluene. From the latter is obtained the substance known as saccharine, which is 230 times as sweet as the best cane sugar, one part of it giving a very sweet taste to 1,000 parts of water. If a ton of coal be used in this way there is a bigger profit in it than if it be sold for burning in a range.—New York World.

Historic English Churchyard.
The Church of St. George the Martyr is famous for the eminent men buried in its churchyard, for this was for many years the burial place of prisoners in the Marshalsea and King's bench, and illustrious prisoners were buried there. Bonner, bishop of London, died in the Marshalsea and was buried in St. George's churchyard, and here, too, are buried Rushworth, clerk of parliament in the days of Charles I, and the famous Cocker, whose arithmetic book went through a hundred editions. The parish register records the marriages of Lilly, the astrologer, and General Monk. This parish register narrowly escaped destruction, for at a public vestry in 1770 it was resolved to sell to Mr. Samuel Carter all the parish papers in a lump at three halfpence per pound.—London Chronicle.

A Terror to Orators.
A speaker in the house of commons has to address "the most chilling, nerve destroying audience in the world." Even such a cool headed, seasoned orator as John Bright once said toward the end of his career (too!) "I suppose I ought to be ashamed of myself, but the fact is that I never rise in the house without a trembling at the knees and a secret wish that some body else would catch the speaker's eye and enable me to sit down again." And Disraeli, who boasted that he had no nerves, declared: "The glare of trumpets, a thousand lookers on, have induced me to lead a forlorn hope. Ambition and men's constitutions have induced me to do a far more desperate thing than speak in the house of commons."—London Mail.

Dogs Trained as Smugglers.
Italian smugglers frequently train dogs to assist in their contraband work. According to a report from the Italian customs officials, the dogs pressed into the smuggling service are first submitted to rigorous training on Swiss territory and after being ill treated by one of the smugglers attired as a customs official are driven across the frontier into Italy. Here, meeting with great kindness from the smugglers, the animals soon distinguish between friends and foes. After a time the canine confederates are taken over the boundary to Switzerland, where they are loaded with excisable articles—sugar, tobacco and spirits—and set free to make their way back to their friends' quarters over the Italian frontier.

Old Geographical Division.
The range of the Blue Ridge mountains in Pennsylvania is divided by a river every twenty-seven miles, as follows. From the Susquehanna to the Swatara, 27 miles from the Swatara to the Schuylkill, 27 miles from the Schuylkill to the Lehigh, 27 miles from the Lehigh to the Delaware, 27 miles. At the next 27 miles is a hole in New Jersey, in which nestles a lake known as Custer's pond.

He Didn't Mind.
Mr. Hardhead I have ordered for to ask you for the hand of your daughter. "Oh! gentlemen in twain emotion, she is the only girl I have, and her mother is gone. Mr. Hardhead has (cries) Oh that's no objection, sir, I am sure you.—London Telegraph

Blasted Hopes.
"Why are you so bitter against Uncle Nebuchadnezzar?" "He lost his money shortly after we named the baby for him."

No Such Course.
Uncle Dick—Young man, do you study diligently at college? Young Man—Nix! There ain't no such course.—California Pelican.

Let gratitude for the past inspire us with trust for the future.—Fenelon.

DEBUTANTE FROCKS.

They Are Quaint and Charming This Season.



POWY THINNED CHIFFON FROCK.

Slender young debutantes are charming in the semi-old fashioned costumes which are the mode now. This little frock of blue chiffon embroidered with old fashioned posies has a touch of sheer white muslin and lace. The knots of velvet add to the quaint effect.

What is New in Furs.

Though the style of this muff and scarf would hardly be suitable for a young girl in her first season, these handsome garments are regal and



MUFF AND SCARF FOR THE MATRON.

sumptuous for an older woman. Persian lamb is very fashionable now and in this instance is combined most effectively with ermine. Black fringes and tassels are used as a finish.

The Rest Room.

It is becoming quite a fad nowadays to have a "rest room" in the house large enough to spare one from general use. In this boudoir, to which any member of the family betakes herself for nerves or headaches, great simplicity is observed in all details. A soft gray paper usually covers the walls, and a generally cool and neat effect is maintained. How much better such a retreat is to the one who would be immune for a few hours from care, noise and the indescribable petty annoyances of the companionship of others, even though their efforts are well meant, cannot be gunged, but that it is a blessing is shown by the clarity with which the retreat is besought by the one who has a headache resulting on or some other trivial indication that she, for a few hours of absolute quiet and rest.

Not For Vassar Girls.

That the women's colleges of America, with the training which they give are doing much to eliminate the divorce evil may be judged from the fact that the records of Vassar show that not a graduate of that institution has ever figured in a divorce case.

Three Kitchen Mades.

Plain Sally Lunn is simple, But good for every day. Brown Betty, more pretentious, Has crisp and spicy way. But Charlotte Russe is sippant, In gayeties she'll plunge. She goes to balls and parties, And quite inclines to spouse.

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The Gloom.

The "gloom" is by origin akin to gloom. The root idea is to look covertly from beneath the brows not with full open eyes, and so the gloaming is that time of day when the sun, sinking below the horizon, shines obscurely under the advancing shades of night, as eyes may gleam dimly from lowering brows.

Byron, the poet, wrote, "As gloaming, the Scottish word for twilight, has been recommended by many literary men and particularly by Dr. Moore in his letters to Burns, I have ventured to use it on account of its harmony."

The evening star is called the "gloaming" star in Scotland, and Lowell's "The snow had begun in the gloaming" and Hogg's "Twixt the gloaming and the morn, when the eye comes and the use," are familiar instances of its use.

Earthquakes.

Earthquakes generally do their work with great rapidity, but there are exceptions. While Caracas and Lisbon were destroyed in a few minutes, the Calabrian earthquakes beginning in 1783 lasted four years. Earthquakes travel across the earth at velocities varying between several hundred and several thousand feet a second, the greater the intensity of the shock the greater being the velocity. The sea waves that frequently accompany earthquakes also travel at tremendous speeds. A submarine earthquake near the coast of Japan in 1854 gave rise to sea waves which traversed the whole breadth of the Pacific at the rate of 870 miles an hour. At Simoda, Japan, the waves from this earthquake were thirty feet high. At San Diego, Cal., they were only six inches high.

"Solid Gold."

Commercially speaking, the term "solid gold" is a misnomer, since such gold has not been used for many, many years. Some of the ancient Roman jewelry and some of that of the Renaissance period was, indeed, made of pure gold, worked up by hand with the crudest of tools, but since the old day there has been a constantly increasing employment of alloys, for the reason that jewelers—and that the harder the gold was required by good artists the greater its wearing qualities and the more secure, therefore, was the setting of the gems it contained. Nowadays jewelry is of 18, 14 or 10 carats, according to the design and character of the article, and it is much more frequently 10 than 18 carats.—Cincinnati Enquirer

Flank Steaks.

The flank contains a broad, flat muscle known as the flank steak, which is a very desirable piece of meat if taken from a well fattened animal. There is no waste to it whatsoever. It is coarse in fiber, but very rich in flavor, and, if carefully prepared is a very choice cut. In thin cattle the flank steak is not usually removed, the flesh being made into rolled roasts or sold for steaks. A rolled roast of the hind flank is one of the most economical cuts in the whole animal. It is good to eat, is cheap and contains no bone.—National Provisioner

Music in Japan.

Music as an art has little standing in Japan, according to a letter in the Traveler's Gazette. It is left almost entirely to women who cultivate it to the extent of playing on a guitar like instrument called the samisen. "In the not very remote past," says the writer, "no gentleman could reconcile the practice of music with masculine dignity and this state of affairs is changing but slowly."

Its Great Fault.

Mrs. Chase said that she goes to that store. It is so necessary for her to do her shopping there. Mrs. Snop says: Well they have everything there Mrs. Chase. That's just it. No matter what you ask for they can suit you right off Philadelphia Press.

A Trouble Maker.

"Do you have trouble when saying your lessons in school, Tommy?" "Yes, sir."

"What seems to trouble you most?" "The teacher."

An Ill Chosen Confidant.
Guest—If it were not for my wife I shouldn't be here. Host—No, hang it! Neither should I if it were not for mine! I'm the hostess' husband.

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