## Desert Dust

By Edwin C. Sabin

Author of "How Are You Feeling?" etc.

With that, she accepted my We promenaded, Jim sauntering near. And as she emphatically was the superior of all other women upon the floor I did not fail to dilate with the distinction accorded me : felt it in the stances, the deference and the ready make-way which attended upon our progress. Frank-ly to say, possibly I strutted—as a young man will when "fortified" withis and without and eleyated from the station of nondescript stranger to that of favored beau.

Whereas an hour before I had been crushed and beggarly, now I turned out my toes and stepped bravely-my twenty-one dollars in pocket, my six-shooter at belt, a red 'kerchief at throat, the queen of the hall on my arm, and my trunk all unnecessary to my well-being.

Thus in easy fashion we moved amidst eyes and salutations from the various degrees of the company. She made no mention of any husband, which might have been odd in the East but did not impress me as especially odd here in the democratic Far West. The women appeared to have an independence of action.

"Shall we risk a play or two?" she proposed. "Are you acquainted with three-card mon-

"Indifferently, madam," said I. "But I am green at all gambling devices.'

"You shall learn," she en-couraged lightly. "In Benton as in Rome, you know. There is no disgrace attached to laving down a dollar here and therewe all do it. That is part of our amusement, in Benton." She halted. "You are game, sir! What is life but a series of chances? Are you disposed to win a little and flout the danger of losing?"

"I am in Benton to win," I valiantly asserted. "And if un- pealed to me. "You see how three-card monte?"

"It is the simplest. Faro would be beyond you yet. Rondo coolo is boisterous and confusing -and as for poker, that is a long vession of nerves, while chucka-luck, though all in the open, is for children and fools. You might throw the dice a thousand times and never cast a lucky combination. Roulette is as bad. The percentage in favor of the bank in a square game is forty per cent. better than stealing. I'll initiate you on monte. Are your eyes quick?"

"For some things," I replied meaningly.

She conducted me to the nearest monte game, where the "spieler"—a smooth-faced lad of not more than nineteen-sat behind his three-legged little table, green covered, and idly shifting the cards about maintained a rather bored flow of conversational incitement to bets.

As happened, he was illy patronized at the moment. There were not more than three or four on-lookers, none risking but all waiting apparently upon one another.

At our arrival the youth glanced up with the most innocent pair of long-lashed brown eyes that I ever had seen. A handsome boy he was.

"Hello, Bob." He smiled, with white teeth.

"Hello yourself."

My lady and he seemed to know each other. "How goes it to-night, Bob?"

"Slow. There's no nerve or money in this camp any more. She's a dead one."

"I'll not have Benton slander-"My Lady gaily retorted. We'll buck your game, Bob. But you must be easy on us. We're green yet."

Bob shot a quick glance at me -in one look had read me from hat to boots. He had shrewder eyes that their first languor intimated.

"Pleased to accommodate you. I'm sure," he answered. "The greenies stand as good a show at this board as the profesh."

"Will you play for a dollar?" "I'll play for two bits, to-night. Anything to start action." He twisted his mouth with ready

"I'm about ripe to bet against She fumbled at her reticule,

but I was beforehand. "No, no." And I fished into

my pocket. "Allow me. I will furnish the funds if you will do the playing."

"I choose the card?" said she. 'That is up to you, sir. You are to learn.'

"By watching, at first," I protested. "We should be part-

"Well," she consented, "if you say so. Partners it is. A lady brings luck, but I shall not always do your playing for you, sir. That kind of partnership comes to grief.

"I am hopeful of playing on my own score, in due time," I responded. "As you will see." "What's the card, Bob? We've

a dollar on it, as a starter." He eyed her, while facing the cards up.

"The ace. You see it-the ace, backed by ten and deuce. Here it is. All ready?" He turned them down, in order; methodically, even listlessly moved them to and fro, yet with light, sure, well-nigh be-wilder-ing touch. Suddenly lifted his hands. "All set. A dollar you don't face up the ace at first

She laughed, bantering. "Oh, Bob! You're too easy. I wonder you aren't broke. You're no monte spieler. Is this your

And I believed that I myself knew which card was the ace. "You hear me, and there's my dollar." He coolly waited. 'Not yours; ours. Will you

make it five?' "One is my limit on this throw.

You named it." "Oho!" With a dart of hand she had turned up the middle card, exposing the ace spot, as I had anticipated. She swept the two dollars to her.

"Adios," she bade. He smiled, indulgent. "So soon? Don't I get my revenge? You, sir." And he apder your direction, so much the | easy it is. I'll throw you a turn quicker. What first, then? The for a dollar, two dollars, five dollars—anything to combine business and pleasure. Whether I win or lose I don't care. You'll follow the lead of the lady?

What?" I was on fire to accept, but she stayed me.

"Not now. I'm showing him around, Bob. You'll get your revenge later. Good-bye. I've drummed up trade for you.'

As if inspired by the winning several of the by-standers, some newly arrived, had money in their hands to stake. So we strolled on; and I was conscious that the youth's brown eyes briefly flicked after us with a peculiar

"Yours." she said. extending the coins to me. I declined. the coins to me.

I declined. "No, indeed. It is part of my tuition. If you will play I will stake."

"I can't have that. You will at least take your own money "Only for another try, mad-

She also declined.

am," I assented. "In that case we'll find a livelier game yonder," said inc. "Bob's just a lazy boy. His game is a piker game. He's too slow to learn from. Let us watch a real game."

## CHAPTER VIII I Stake On The Queen

Jim had disappeared; until when we had made way to another monte table there he was, his hands in his pockets, his cigar half smoked.

More of a crowd was here; the voice of the spieler more insist-ent, yet low-pitched and businesslike. He was a study-a square-shouldered, well set-up, wiry man of olive complexion, finely chiseled features save for nose somewhat cruelly beaked, of short black moustache, dead black long wavy hair, and, placed boldly wide, contrastive hard gray eyes that lent atmosphere of coldness to his face. His hat was pulled down over his forehead, he held an unlighted cigar between his teeth while he mechanically spoke and shifted the three cards (a diamond flashing from a finger, upon the

baize-covered little table.

Money had been wagered. He had just raked in a few notes, adding them to his pile. His mono-

tone droned on. "Next, ladies and gentlemen. sometimes I win, sometimes I lose

That is my business. The play is yours. You may think I have two charces to your one; that is not so. You make the choice. Always the queen, always the queen. You have only to watch the queen, one card. I have three cards. You have your two eyes, I have my two hands. You spot the card only when you think you can. I meet all comers. It is an even gamble."

Jim remarked us as we joined. "How you comin' now?" he greeted of me.

"We won a dollar," My Lady responded.

"Not I. She did the choosing," I corrected.
"But you would have chosen

the same card, you said," she prompted. "You saw how easy

"Easy if you know how," Jim asserted. "Think to stake a leetle here? I've been keepin' cases and luck's breaking ag'in the bank to-night, by gosh. Made several turns, myself, already."

"We'll wait a minute tih we get his system," she answered. "Are you watching, ladies and gentlemen?" bade the dealer, in that even tone. "You see the eight of clubs, the eight of spades, the queen of hearts. The queen is your card. My hand against your eyes, then. You are set? There you are. Pick the queen, some one of you. Put your money on the queen of hearts. You can turn the card yourself. What? Nobody? Don't be pikers. Let us have a little sport. Stake a dollar. Why, you'd toss a dollar down your throat—you'd lay a dollar on a cockroach race—you'd bet that much on a yellow dog if you owned him, just to show your spirit. And here I'm offering you a straight proposition."

With a muttered "I'll go you another turn, Mister," Jim stepped closer and planked down a dollar. The dealer cast a look up at him as with pleased sur-

"You, sir? Very good. You have spirit. Money talks. Here is my dollar. Now, to prove to these other people what a good guesser you are, which is the queen ?"

"Here," Jim said confidentially; and sure enough he faced p the queen of nearts.

"The money's yours. You never earned a dollar quicker. I'll wager, friend," the dealer acknowledged, imperturbable—for he evidently was one who never evinced the least emotion, whether he won or lost. "Very good. Now."

From behind him a man-a newcomer to the spot, who looked like any respectable Eastern merchant, being well dressed and grave of face-touched him upon the shoulder. He turned ear; while he inclined farther they whispered together, and I witnessed an arm steal swiftly forward a my side, and a thumb and finger slightly bend up the extreme corner of the queen. The hand and arm vanished; when the dealer fronted us again the queen was apparently just as before. Only we who had seen would have marked the bent

The act had been so clever and so audacious that I fairly held my breath. But the gambler resumed his flow of talk, while he fingered the cards as if totally unaware that they had been tampered with.

"Now, again, ladies and gentlemen. You see how it is done. You back your eyes, and you win. I find that I shall have to close early to-night. Make your hay while the sun shines. Who'll be in on this turn! Watch the queen of hearts. I place her here. coax the three cards a little-'' he gave a swift flourish. "There they are"

His audience hesitated, as if fearful of a trick, for the bent corner of the queen, raising this end a little, was plain to us who knew. It was absurdly plain.

"I'll pick out the queen ag'in for a dollar." "I'll go you another, Mister," Jim responded.

The gambler smiled grimly and shrugged his shoulders. "Oh, pshaw, sir. These are small stakes. You'll never get rich at that rate and neither shall

"I reckon I can set my own limit," Jim grumbled.

"Yes, sir. But let's have action. Who'll join this gentleman in his guess? Who'll back his luck? He's a winner, I admit that."

The gray eyes dwelt upon face and face of our half circle; and still I, too, hesitated, although my dollar was burning a hole in my pocket.

My Lady whispered to me. "All's fair in love and wat. Here—put this on, with yours for me." She shipped a dollar of her own into my hand.

Another man stepped forward. He was, I judged, a teamster His clothes, of flannel shirt, belted trousers and six-shooter and dusty boots, so indicated. And his beard was shaggy and unkempt, almost covering his face underneath his drooping slouch

"I'll stake you a dollar." he

"Two from me," I heard myself saying, and I saw my hand depositing them.

"You're all on this gentleman's card, remember?"

We nodded. The bearded man tipped me a wink.

"You, sir, then, turn the queen if you can," the gambler challenged of Jim.

With quick movement Jim flopped the bent-corner card, and the queen herself seemed to wink jovially at us.

The gambler exclaimed. "By God, gentlemen, but you've skinned me again. I'm clumsy to-night. I'd better quit." And he scarcely varied his level tone despite the chuckles of the crowd. "You must let me try once more. But I warn you, I want action. I'm willing to meet any sum you stack up against me, if it's large enough to spell action. Shall we go another round or two before . close up?" He gathered the three cards. "You see the queen -my unlucky queen of hearts. Here she is." He stowed the card between thumb and finger. Here are the other two." He held them up in his left handthe eight of clubs, the eight of spades. He transferred themwith his rapid motion he strewed the three. "Choose the queen. I put the game to you fair and square. There are the cards. Maybe you can read their backs. That's your privilege." He fixed his eyes upon the teamster. "You, sir; where's your money, half of which was mine?" He glanced at Jim. "And you, sir? You'll follow your luck?" Lastly he surveyed me with a flash of steely bravado. "And you, young gentleman You came in

before. I dare you." The bent corner was more pronounced than ever, as if aggravated by the manipulations. It could not possibly be mistaken by the knowing. And a sudden shame possessed me-a glut of this crafty advantage to which I was stooping; an advantage gained not through my own wit, either, but through the dishonorable trick of another.

"There's your half from me, if you want it," said Jim, slapping down two dollars. "This is my night to howl.'

For Favors Received. Mae: "My modiste wrote to my hus-band saying she would make no more dresses for me until my account was settled." Rae: "And what did hubby do?"
Mae: "Oh, he just sent her a letter
of thanks."

From the Kansas City Star.

"The dismemberment of Germany seems at hand," remarked Prof. Pate.

"The people are starving, the Separatists are in rebellion, the monarchists are rising, the treasury is empty and a foreign foe has seized the Lineral resources of the country."

"Uh-huh!" returned J. Fuller Gloom.

"Looks somewhat like rain, off to the southwest, doesn't it?" Sympathetic Interest.

Understanding Hiram From the Anaconda Standard. If we get Hiram aright, Calvin Coolidge could make the finest liv-ing ex-President of the United States.

Plenty of That. From the Duluth Herald. About the only thing European na-tions now have in common is a lack of confidence in the other fellow.

An Exception. From the American Legion Weekly. Rub: "Ignorance of the law excuses "I wonder how my lawyer es-

Outside the Law. From the Topeka Capital.

A salesmanlike looking inspector was surprised to find a dirty roller towel in the washroom. Indignatily he said to the landlord:
"Don't you know that it has been against the law for years to put up a roller towel?"
"Sure, I know it," replied the proprietor, "but no ex-posto law goes in Kansas and that there towel was put up before the law was passed."

From Punch. Golfer (whose unknown opponent has driven a straight 250 yards from the first tee—"Say, does he often do that?" Caddle—"It's all right, sir—'is foot

From the Telegraph Table. Frank Weaver, Kansas University's "oldest student," is dead, Mr. Weaver, who obtained his engineering degree from the university at the age of \$1 years, last June, died of pneumonia at his home in Pueblo, Colo. recently. Weaver, a civil war veteran, had completed two years at the university prior to 1871, then took up practical work.

Having found a perfect rib roast, one cut from "Broadus White Socks" grand champion steer of the recent fivestock exhibition in Chicago, Dean Munford of the University of Illinois has refused to eat it, but will have it preserved in alcohol in the university laboratory. He says he wishes the students to have an opportunity to study the proper proportions of fat gud lean meat displayed in the roast.

## **BANKERS WILL MEET COOLIDGE NEXT MONDAY**

Fifty Financiers Expected to Attend Conference Called In Washington

BY JOHN A. KENNEDY Special Tribune Correspondent Washington, Jan. 28 .- The adminisration's conference for rehabilitating he banking structure of the middle northwest will be held here next Monday, President Coolidge an-

nounced Monday. Decision to invite some 50 finacial and business leaders on that date was reached following a conference between the president, Secretarys Hoover, Mellon and Wallace, Comptroller of Currency Dawes, George James, members of the Federal Reserve board, and Governor Crissinger of the Federal Reserve board. The main object of the meeting will be to demonstrate to insurance, railroad, mortgage and banking interests just how the straightening out of the financial tangle in the northwest will benefit the country generally.

Use "Big Stock" It is also known that at this time President Coolidge will devise means of using the "Big Stick" on the larger banking interests in his plan to compel they to join in the government's program of relief for the middle northwest.

Secretary Hoover, who is in charge of arrangements for next Monday's conference, will issue further details of his plans Tuesday, it was said at

his office Monday evening. It became known Monday that the Federal Reserve board held two important meetings here Saturday, following the return of members James and Cunningham, who participated in the Chicago meeting a week ago. The main purpose of the meeting was to devise methods by which the board can come to the aid of Dakotas' banking situation.

Board Expected to Act. It is thought that the Federal Reserve board will send out orders to its Chicago and Minneapolis banks to loosen up in acceptances of some of the slower paper now in the hands of individual banks. Idaho, and Montana Agricultural interest, represented by delegations from those two states, had conferences with the president Monday, urging aid for the stricken region.

The progressive group in the Senate, composed of the nine senators from the middle northwest, elected during the past two years, sent out a what type of legislation would best suit the farmer at the present time. They expect to have the answers to the questions when the agricultural committees make their report.

## **PARIS AROUSED** BY PLAIN TALK FROM BRITAIN

Break in Relations of Two Governments Regarded As Possibility

Paris, Jan. 28 .- "A violent rupture of the Franco-British relations must not be excluded from the possibilities of tomorrow," is the comment of the famous editor, Pertinax, in Echo De Paris, Monday morning.

This accurately sums up the feeling in official circles following the publication of an interview with Premier Ramsay MacDonald, of Enggland, in the socialist paper Quotidien, in which the British premier declared to France in plain language:

"The moral and material encouragement given by France to small nations is likely to make a new war inevitable.

"The British people are-wondering, in all sincerity, whether England will not find it necessary to undertake new military measures and find other alliances. The interview was followed up by Premier MacDonald sounding out

Premier Poincare through an intermediary in the person of the Beligan Foreign Minister Jaspar Sunday, regarding the British government's plan for putting the Rhine frontier under the League of Nations. Poincare, a nationalist, and Mac-

Donald, an internationalist, are as far apart as the two poles, neutral diplomats here say, and the only hope seen for the maintenance of the entente would be the creation in France of a radical socialist govenment with M. Serriot as premier. Serriot's views in many particulars concide with those of Premier Mac-Donald.

The present French foreign office greets the reported plan of the British premier with complete skepticism and, it is stated, will not agree to the British project for an international conference unless the subject of the Ruhr is barred from discussion.

Milady May Have Cigaret To Match Her Gown Now

New York, Jan. 28. (U. P.)-Women smoked 7,000,000,000 cigarets in 1923, according to the national tobacco exposition in session here, so it was decided there should be something new and special in cigarets henceforth for milady. That's why vari-colored cigaretesanything to match any gown-came into vogue today. Cerise, lemon peach blossom, black and crimson are among the popular shades.



**Britain Growing Tobacco** As a matter of civic pride and in the interest of industrial development Great Britain is making strengous effort to grow tobacco on a commercial scale and to inculcate into the British inhabitants a taste for the local week. Great Britain, since the day when Sir Walter Raleigh introduced smoking, has been getting her tobacco mainly from Havana, Jamaica, Nigeria and Virginia plantations. In fact, Great Britain once got finer leaf than did any American cigar makers.

DEMAND "BAYER" ASPIRIN Take Tablets Without Fear If You See the Safety "Bayer Cross."

Warning! Unless you see the name "Bayer" on package or on tablets you are not getting the genuine Bayer Aspirin proved safe by millions and prescribed by physicians for 23 years. Say "Bayer" when you buy Aspirin. Imitations may prove dangerous.--Adv.

A man isn't necessarily brilliant because he sits down and reflects occasionally.

"CASCARETS" FOR LIVER AND BOWELS-10c A BOX

Headache, Indigestion. Drug stores. Adv. Lamb with green peas suits some men, but the bucket shop prefers lamb with greenbacks.

Cures Biliousness, Constipation, Sich

Mrs. Eliza Teeter

HAVE YOU A COUGH? What This Woman Says is of Vital Interest to You

Goshen, Ind.—"I had coughed night and day for a whole year and had lost so much flesh I began to look like a walking much flesh I began to look like a walking skeleton. Two of my sisters had died from tuberculosis and I felt certain that my time had come. Finally, a friend recommended Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery to my husband, and it made me feel new strength and vitality right from the start and in a year's time I was just as strong and hardy as ever. I have never suffered with a deep, hacking cough since (that was about 20 years ago) and have always felt very grateful to Dr. Pierce."—Mrs. Eliza Teeter, 413 Middlebury St.

Whenever you feel the need of good

Whenever you feel the need of good confidential medical advice, address Dr. Pierce, president Invalids' Hotel, Buffalo N. Y., and answer will be returned without struge of any kind.