

Gilding the Gold Brick

By JOHN IRVING DAY

A Puss-Fattening Adventure of Members of the High Rollers Club in the Realms of High and Low Finance.

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EVERYBODY in the High Rollers club was most stirred of all things than unlimited wealth in the sporting world of the gambling resort. No millionaire club was more difficult of entrance and in its own peculiar way the High Rollers club was as exclusive as the Carlton in London.

The High Rollers club did no shorter an organization and neither did it have a palatial Bedford square building as its home. Its meetings were in "Old Bill" Powley's bachelor home in a semi-select section of Chicago. The honorarium title had been given Powley by his acquaintances. The title was one of the very few things that ever had been given Powley. He had won most of his other possessions by hard-battle and tactics.

Col. Powley, with all his prestige of a gentleman, could scarcely have put up or become a member of the Union League club. For that matter, neither did he belong to the Union League, the roster of the Union League would have been welcome into the High Rollers. The only bankers Col. Powley ever had been on intimate terms with were the ones who had behind a green-clothed table and dealt cards from a silver box.

Outside on the street the wind was driving up from the lake and whirling the snow around corners, blinding with its fury the few pedestrians that were forced to be abroad. It was about as hard a night as ever comes to the city by the big lake and inside the High Rollers club there were not enough members to make up a bridge game. Those present had made vain attempts to round up a player to fill out with a hand when a cab stopped in front of the door. The passenger dismissed the vehicle and he stepped into the house with a latch key, proving that he was a member in good standing, for none other had such means of entrance.

"Well, if it isn't Doc Floyd! Where have you been for the past week?" was the greeting of the new comer. Col. Powley did not join in the blustering greeting but gazed over the tops of his gold-rimmed spectacles at the man who had just entered and who was his one prime favorite of others. He waited while the clean-cut person who might have been either 30 or 40 years old, so far as looks went, crossed the room to shake his hand.

"Sit down and tell us about yourself," commanded the colonel when the Jap servant had relieved Floyd from his winter, leaving him immaculate of presence and white-fronted and evening-clothed, a man who would have been noted in any evening function as one who belonged with the best.

"Oh, I've been out in one of the tank boxes playing a week stand with the courts," remarked Floyd by way of explanation when he had seated himself in front of the wide-open fireplace.

"It can't be that you've been in any trouble, yourself," cut in the colonel. The older man had first admired Floyd and then grown to hold him in affectionate regard, because though he had fought his way from rags and had wrested a competence from the world by the power of his brain, never had he been in the clutches of the law. Such a thing was considered vulgar in the circles of the High Rollers.

"No, it was Jack Cleland," explained Floyd. "He went out on a little deal on his own hook and got caught before he had a chance to turn it. He found a rich butcher who liked to play cards and never had heard of the old game of giving the sucker the best of it. Some one tipped off the game and the town marshal got Cleland before he even got the butcher's bank roll."

"You're certainly 'Old Doc' Fixer," all right enough," remarked the youngest member of the party and the one who had greeted Floyd so enthusiastically on his arrival. "If ever I get into any trouble, I'll send for you first thing, unless it happens to be trouble with my sweetheart, and then I'd be afraid that you might fix it for yourself."

"No danger for that," laughed Floyd. "I'm afraid I'm too conditioned to do anything for anybody."

"High Gates," snorted Col. Powley, "better let 'em alone. I've just been reading in the afternoon paper, here, about a smart New York girl trimmed by a smart dame in one of the Michigan avenue hotels. She played the lone and innocent widow act and passed off a phony mortgage on his for

15,000 and then threatened to write a letter to the broker's wife if he made a squeal. Who would ever think a smart New Yorker would fall for such a game? Still, her game was about as new as any of them I've heard of recently. It seems there's a regular gang of handshakes (Cassie Chadwick) roving in rich visitors to this city and then leaving blackmail on them. The blackmail part I can't stand for, and I hope they all get caught, but the woman that worked that phony mortgage off on a Wall Street man ought to be admitted to the woman's auxiliary of the High Rollers. If there was such a thing, which I think God there ain't."

"The woman didn't work any new game either," broke in Alderman Manly, a member of the party who had sat quietly listening to the conversation. "It hasn't been three months since a real estate man and a pillar of respectability in business confessed to selling \$2,000,000 worth of phony mortgages. If it wasn't somebody's

people of the north. Peter Slicer, eminent, lifelong citizen of Cumberland and deacon of the M. E. church, south, was waxing fat with the boom that had come to his town.

It was not as a banker, but as minor host of the Slicer hotel, that Peter Slicer. The hostelry was his pride and he affected to welcome coming and speed parting guests with a flavor of the true southern gentleman. He could afford to be affable to these same guests for they paid him good rates for his hospitality.

Thus it was that Peter Slicer in person welcomed Mr. F. Strothers Floyd, known to his intimates as "Doc Fixer," when that eminent practitioner alighted from the hotel bus.

The day following his arrival Floyd became a further here in the eyes of the bell boys and also made known his generous qualities by coming to the rescue of a small barometering theatrical company that had become wrecked in Cumberland. "We are billed in August to mor-

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"No sir, I have never allowed anything of the kind in my hotel, and I will not let you have an apartment for such a purpose, even at double rates," the hotel proprietor was exclaiming.

Floyd was the only occupant other than the hotel man and the stranger to whom he had been talking, and he never even raised his eyes as the latter left the room.

"What do you think that fellow wanted?" burst out the indignant Slicer to Floyd when the stranger was out of hearing.

"Don't know, I'm sure. What was it?"

"Why, he wants an apartment to open up a faro bank game in and I won't have it."

"His, Ha! Am why so particular?" laughed Floyd. "I've seen some pretty big poker and bridge games here. What's the difference, if he runs a square game and keeps it quiet? For my part, I'd like to buy a few stacks

"Dear Floyd: I've just got back from the placer mine and brought the bricks with me. The property is a sure winner and will make us rich. I'm sending your share in the brick which is pure and worth \$2,000. I could have sent the money instead, but don't suppose you need it and thought you would like to see the real yellow stuff."

Slicer folded the letter and gave it to the elevator boy to give to Floyd on his next trip up to the rooms, and then decided that he would deliver it into the hands of his own groom himself. When he reached the room Floyd was just passing \$1,000 in bills over to the doer behind the table for which he received in return two stacks of canary colored checks. He seemed too preoccupied to think the hotel man for bringing the letter, as he shored it carefully back into his pocket and went on playing. Fascinated by the play, as men will become when watching it, Slicer stood behind Floyd and saw him lose steadily. Every few moments the player would call for a drink which he quipped down hurriedly. Slicer stood by the table for an hour or so when time Floyd managed to drop \$2,000.

"That's all the ready money I've got," he muttered, flushed with excitement. "Let me have another thousand and I'll give you a check for it."

"Sorry, Mr. Floyd, but we can't take any paper," was the polite but firm reply of the dealer.

"Then I'll cash my check for a thousand with you, Slicer."

"Why, Mr. Floyd, you know—that's not just regular," stammered the hotel man. "I don't think you ought to lose any more just now."

"Lose nothing," spluttered Floyd with all the fever of gambling showing in the flush on his face, as he followed Slicer from the room, and down the elevator. "See here, then, if you won't cash my check, get me back the money you put away in the safe for me and bring it into your private office."

The covering was taken from a large, dull yellow brick of metal which was laid upon the table in Slicer's private office where a bell boy fetched a file and small sugar which were demanded by Floyd. When these were brought he filed a small particle from all edges of the block and then asked Slicer to take the sugar and wear through any part of it.

"Get your small scales and weigh it and see if it don't weigh up \$2,000 worth, and then if you think I'm trying the gold brick bunco on you, take the stuff you've holed out over to the fellow and have it tested. I've got to have money to get even with that faro bank and you can have the chunk for \$1,500. I'm not known at your own bank here and they wouldn't take a chance of buying gold dollars from me at 50 cents apiece. You can get rid of it for what it's worth, and make a good profit of nearly a 100 per cent. Now hurry on to the jewelry store and then go get me the money at the bank and get back as quick as you can so I can get even with that game."

The finely grained metal was poured into an envelope, and a sudden glint came into the eyes of Peter Slicer as he thought he detected a slight of hand toying with the envelope.

"Well, just put this brick here in the safe until I get back," said the cautious hotel man. "You can wait here in the office until I return."

Instead of the jeweler's, Slicer headed for the court house as soon as he left the office and succeeded in finding the sheriff of the county. "What do you think?" he exploded to that official. "There's a chap over at my hotel trying to work the old gold brick game on me. Why, I've been on to that game since I was a boy. I want you to arrest him. I'm going to show one of these swindlers up and put him in the penitentiary, where he belongs!"

"Wait a minute, now," cautioned the sheriff. "You say he is going to sell you \$2,500 in gold for \$1,500. We must get him dead to rights. You go on to your bank and get the currency and then I'll wait outside your office door and see you pay it over. We'll have a clear case against him, then."

Ten minutes later Floyd was just placing a roll of bills in his pocket when a voice demanded that he throw up his hand and submit to a search.

"And you needn't make any bluff, young fellow; we've got you all right," declared the sheriff.

Two nights following his arrest Floyd drove up to the High Rollers club in a cab. Dismissing the driver, he let himself in with his latch key. Col. Powley and the alderman were both present and received a telegram that Floyd would meet them. Floyd entered the room and without waiting to pass the time of day laid a certified check for \$5,000, bearing the signature of Peter Slicer, in the hands of the alderman.

"I guess you lose, alderman, and I'm ready for that dinner, as soon as you can get a quorum together," Cleland is down at the hotel and will take you how I worked it in a new way. He didn't a few hands in the game for me."

"How did I do it?" It was easy, I picked out the best lawyer in a little Georgia town and picked up the wisest citizen there and sold him a gold brick. Of course he had me arrested. The trouble was that the brick was the real genuine article and my lawyer had to have appointed him that it would be cheaper for him to pay me \$5,000 and give me a check for \$5,000, as well as throw in my hotel accommodation for a night a \$25,000 stock for false arrest."

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YOU CAN HAVE THE CHUNK FOR \$1,500.

spring a new game? I'd like to see one." "What's the use of new to one?" growled Col. Powley, "when there's always a sucker ready to bite at the old bait? Every funny sheet in America has had pictures and funny paragraphs about the gold brick men for the last dozen years, and still I'll bet Doc Floyd can go out and land a good and wise citizen with the old game and go back here in the club inside of two weeks' time."

"You're dreaming. Wake up and take a drink," was the half contemptuous, retort of the alderman. "He'd get pitched the first roll out the box. Why, the jack rabbits out on the plains are wise to gold bricks."

"That may be, but if Doc says he'll do it and is willing to take a chance, I'll bet you \$5,000 on the side that he'll land the \$2,000 he goes after, and if he gets arrested he'll get free of that, too."

"You're 'on' snipped back the alderman. "Five thousand and a dinner for the club that he can't raise \$5,000 with a gold brick? How about it, Doc?"

"Whatever the boss says, I'm game for," was the easy reply of Floyd. "I warn you, though, that I won't work with a plebeian Indian partner, dressed in paint and a big gun, or the busy government assayer. I claim a little originality. If you agree to let me work it in my own way, I'll try to land you another thousand on the side. I win."

Cumberland, Ga., had come to boast of its growing fame as a winter resort for invalids, semi-invalids and lazy people of the north. Peter Slicer, eminent, lifelong citizen of Cumberland and deacon of the M. E. church, south, was waxing fat with the boom that had come to his town.

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WHY HE LIKED TIGHT SHOES

Little's Remark That "The Old Great Light on the Home Conditions of Amos Dore."

"We always wondered a little how Amos Dore and his wife got along—frankly," "Aunt Em" Macomber said. "Some in the neighborhood said they never overheard a single word of cross word on either side, but Life Dore's always stuck to it that Amos was as misable at home as a man could be."

"He never spoke right out till Amos died and Mrs. Dore went back up-country to her folks. Then he let out."

"What?" queried Aunt Em's visitor.

"Well, Amos worked longer about a mile of Life every winter, and all summer they had together most all ways, and it seems," said Aunt Em. "I'm sure," "that Amos complained of his shoes hurting him on either side, but Life Dore's always asked why he wore tight shoes."

"Why don't you get a pair big enough?" says Life one day.

"Well, I'll tell you," Amos says. "When I wear tight shoes I forget all my other troubles."—Youth's Companion.

NEVER DONE.

Slunkus—I-I hope you didn't mind my putting a little matter of \$5 in the hands of the bill collector yesterday.

Poker—Not at all; I borrowed a dollar from him.

Youngster's Fellow Feeling.

A small boy, about five years old, was taken to an entertainment by his mother the other evening. It was 10:30 o'clock when they reached home and the little fellow was very tired and sleepy. He undressed quickly and hopped into bed. "George," said his mother sternly. "I'm surprised at you. Why, mamma," he asked. "You didn't see your father's feet right out of the bed and say them?" "Aw mamma, came from the tired youngster, "what's the use of waking the Lord up at this time of night to hear me prout?"



Her Decision and His.

An earnest single aspirant dramatically addressed to the manager that unless she could obtain an engagement she would kill herself. To quiet the lady the manager agreed to bear her recite.

He listened a few minutes. Then he unlocked a drawer in his desk and handed her a revolver—Lippincott.

The Rebound.

"Every time we were alone before we were married you used to take advantage of the fact that I was a man you thought of me."

"And now every time we are not alone you tell me what you think of me."—Houston Post.

Widness.

"Your boy was just a little—well when he was at college wasn't he a wild cat? He generally was a wild cat, first. Cuzkin' got 'em over the plate you know. But he always steamed down before the game was over."

"Not the Fly Swapper."

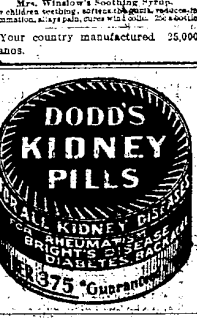
"Well, Johnny, having any luck? What do you say with worms or flies?"

"Worms," of course. It ain't warm enough for flies to come around here."

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup.

For children's teething, soothes the gums, reduces inflammation, and cures colic.

Your country manufactured 25,000 plants.



Interesting Facts

The only effective and reliable remedy known for Gout, Dyspepsia, Jaundice, Kidney and Headache troubles, Constipation, Headache, Rheumatism and all disorders of the bowels.

DR. D. JAYNE'S SANATIVE PILLS

For over 40 generations they have been a household necessity for relieving and curing complaints of this kind. They are safe and pure, in every instance. They are sold by all druggists and cathartic they are unnecessary.

Sold by Druggists everywhere in 25c and 10c boxes