A CHARACTER PARADOX.

Jack Bowdoin's Conversion and How It Came About.

BY CLAY M. GREENE.

CHAPTER I.

He was a gambler and rumseller, who knew all the tricks of both trades, and employed them whenever and wherever occasion seemed to demand. He was an outcast and desperado, who was the one because his social preferences were those far removed from the customs of polite society, and the other because the value of a human life was measured altogether by the weight of provocation that existed when he felt himself called upon to take one, and he had taken several.

If, in a game of draw, his opponents long continued to hold stronger hands than he, the dexterous and complacent way in which he would "stock the cards," and turn the apparent tide of chance, would have done credit to the most accomplished "skin gambler" of the West.

If—as often the case—an election, or a holiday, or a vigilance committee meeting had caused a cessation in his stock of whisky, he would brew a vile decoction of alcohol, water, dried peaches and burnt sugar, and sell it as "Pure Old Bourbon, warranted ten years old."

Sometimes a better judge of spirits than were his usual run of customers would swallow this compound with a painful grimace, and criticise it in language grotesquely impolite. Whereupon our hero would launch forth an avalanche of profane pyrotechnics, and hurl it at the wholesale liquor-dealers in Denver. He would declare between the periods of invective that if there was one thing above another which occupied a large percentage of his spare time it was the study of the welfare of his customers' appetites; that he paid more money for one gallon of whisky than any other dealer in Aspen paid for ten, and it was a blickety-blanked shame to be stood up and robbed by the man for whom he was always too ready and willing to "tap his bundle," as he metaphorically termed the payment of outstanding indebtedness.

And yet this unconscionable rogue, this bare-faced swindler, who would as willingly tell a lie as the truth, whose dealings were oftener "crooked than square," who was never invited to break bread at the family boards even of men who called him friend, had a heart in his breast that was soft as a woman's and a hidden nature as gentle as a child's.

A large percentage of his yearly earnings were divided every New Year's Day among the charities of his State, and the families of three unfortunates, who had been driven to suicide by losses at his faro table, were cared for as lavishly as though they had been his own.

When they built the little brown church in Aspen he sent a thousand dollars in gold to the committee, accompanied by the message that they could have as much more if they wanted it. But the hands of these devout Christians were uplifted in holy horror at the thought that such tainted gold should be paid for out of the wages of sin. So the sum was returned with a daintily worded letter of regret, to the effect that, much as the enterprise needed money, it could not possibly receive assistance from such a source.

But Jack was never wanting in alternative when faced by a dilemma, and, although the reply of the committee wounded him, he kept his counsel, and sent to Chicago for an organ costing twice as much as his original subscription. This was shipped direct to the church people, labeled:

"To the First——— Church of Aspen, from a devout friend."

The pretty little edifice was duly finished, the mysteriously begotten organ crowded into the tiny loft, and on consecration day the good minister twice referred to it in his sermon, under the text of "The Lord will provide."

Jack was there, standing alone in a remote corner of the church, as though conscious that he must not contaminate the good Christians by coming into closer contact with them. The day before the consecration he accosted a worthy member of the congregation on the street, and the following brief colloquy ensued:

"Say, Deacon, would that there church blow up if I's to go to the openin' tomorrow?"

"That is a strange question to ask," replied the worthy man. "Why?"

"Well, yer see, they sent back the little bag o' twenties I subscribed, and as that showed there was a feelin' agin me, I thought I'd ask fur an invitation, fur I wouldn't like to go there and get fired out."

"The sinner and wayfarer are always welcome in the house of prayer, Mr. Bowdoin."

"Well, if any man in Colorado knows any more about sinnin' and wayfarin' than me, fetch him along and I'll make him rich. I'll be there, dead sure."

"I hope so." And the good parishioner, with a nervous glance at a corner saloon where a crowd of idlers stood smiling at this picture of the lion and the lamb, nodded coldly and went away.

On the following morning Jack entered the church and braved the scornful glances of the devout who had already assembled. He was indeed a sinner by the wayside, but no good Samaritan was there to lend him a friendly hand, and indicate that he might have a seat if he wished it. So he took his position in the remote corner above referred to, and with hat in hand waited for service to begin. Before many moments a sound swelled through the church that rooted him to his feet in a kind of stupor of wonderment and delight. It was the organ, his own mysterious gift, pealing forth the majestic harmonies of Haydn's Offertory.

Never before in all of his misspent life had such melody smote his ears. He was passionately fond of music, and had taught himself to strum the popular melodies of the day on the "tin-panny" little piano in his gambling hall; but these sounds that swelled forth in response to the touch of the unseen organist held him spell-bound. He was enthralled beyond the power of human pen to describe, and had any one of that Christian throng kneeling before him given him one word of encouragement as he stood there under the influence of that noble music, there might have been another sinner gathered into the fold.

But when the selection was finished, and the minister knelt in prayer, the spell had vanished, and he ejaculated to himself:

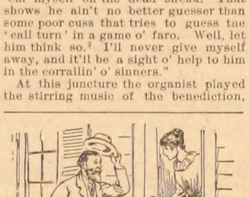
"Why, a piano ain't deuce high to that. I'll send for an organ the fust thing in the mornin' and have it sot up in 'The Little Casino.'"

The intervals between the musical numbers during the remainder of the service were unintelligible to Jack, and be it also recorded, correspondingly tiresome, which condition was several times emphasized by a series of yawns, which he made no attempt to control.

When the sermon was reached, however, and the donator of the organ referred to as a servant of the Lord who, obedient to the heavenly command, had magnanimously hidden his light under a bushel, and mysteriously presented it to the church, he could control his sense of humor no longer, and a loud guffaw awoke the congregation from their devotions, set every member of it glaring at him in unspeakable horror, and, suddenly becoming aware of the offense he had committed, rushed out into the churchyard.

"Well, I be blowed!" he chuckled to himself, "the parson claimed the Lord provided that organ, when I sent it to 'em myself on the dead sneak. That shows he ain't no better guesser than some poor cuss that tries to guess the 'call turn' in a game o' faro. Well, let him think so. I'll never give myself away, and it'll be a sight o' help to him in the corrallin' o' sinners."

At this juncture the organist played the stirring music of the benediction.



HE GULPED DOWN AN EXCLAMATION OF SURPRISE.

and as the congregation was filing out of the church, Jack sought a convenient corner, where he would not be liable to pass through the awful ordeal of reproach on the part of some good Christian for the unpardonable sin of laughing during service.

Soon the churchyard was deserted, save for the presence of a small boy, and him Jack accosted familiarly:

"Say, sonny, was you in church?"

"Yep."

"Know where that organist lives?"

"Yep. Hopkins', on the hill yonder."

"Much obliged." And tossing the astonished urchin a five-dollar gold piece, he entered a neighboring saloon, ordered four fingers of whisky to give him courage, and, passing again into the street, walked briskly in the direction of the organist's abode.

Arriving at the door, he rang the bell with an air of reverential awe. He felt that in standing before the shelter of any one whose fingers could conjure an organ into pouring out such entrancing sounds as those he had just listened to must be supernatural.

The door was opened by what seemed to him the only beautiful woman he had ever met. If an angel had appeared to him from out of the gates of Heaven, he could not have been so entranced as he was then by the simple, radiant beauty of the fair young creature who stood before him. He gulped down an exclamation of surprise, removed his hat, and stammered out:

"My name's Bowdoin—I—I'm nothin' but a gambler, but I'd like to see the organist o' the new church."

Both his assertion and the accompanying request seemed to startle her for a moment, but recovering her equanimity she answered modestly:

"I am the organist."

He started in surprise.

"You, Miss? Can you play like that?"

"I hope to play better when I become more accustomed to the instrument."

"Is it a good one, Miss?"

"The best of its size I ever played upon."

"Miss, I'll give you a thousand dollars for ten lessons."

"Why, a hundred lessons would not amount to half that sum."

"Well, they'll have to for me. A hundred a lesson or it don't go. What do yer say—eh?"

She looked at him nervously for a moment, and he read her thoughts, but awaited her reply.

"Well, I hardly know what to say. I hope to get my living by teaching music, but——"

"But you don't think you could afford to teach a man like me. Is that it?"

A moment's hesitation, a blush, and she replied: "Frankly, then, yes. But I'll consult our pastor and let you know."

"Do, Miss; please do." And here he evinced a tenderness and earnestness that was quite new to him. "Tell him I'm a gambler, and the worst o' my kind, for I deal a brace game. But I feel, Miss, there's something inside this here tough hide o' mine that music like yours can bring out. Tell him I heard him say to-day, 'Seek, and you'll find; knock, and it'll de opened to yer.' And I'm knockin' at your door to-day, seekin' for somethin', that'll make a better man of me. Will yer tell him this?"

"Yes."

"And when'll I hear from yer?"

"To-night."

"Then good-mornin', Miss, and I'm obliged to yer for wastin' so much time on me. Been yer note to 'The Little Casino.' That's the name of my place."

"Very well, sir." And the door closed, shutting out his first glimpse of paradise.

That evening a note came to him, worded as follows:

DEAR SIR: After consulting with the pastor, I am forced to the conclusion that it will be unadvisable for me to give you the organ lessons spoken of this morning, and I must confess to you that I am truly sorry.
Yours, HELEN CHARLES.

"I thought so," he said, with a sigh. "I was afraid that 'ud be the answer. But she's sorry, and there's some sunshine in that. I'll start in to-night and try to turn square. Maybe that'll make the parson change his mind. It'll take some time, though, and, as I can't wait for them lessons, I'll send for an organ right away, and learn the darned thing myself."

A duplicate of the order for the church organ was sent to Chicago by the first mail, and that night Jack took his first step toward turning square by dealing an honest game of faro, and losing five thousand dollars.

CHAPTER II.

During the two weeks following the events recorded in the preceding chapter, the habitues of "The Little Casino" noticed a marked change in the habits and demeanor of its proprietor. His whisky became so popular that drinkers passed by other saloons and went "around the corner to Jack's for a decent drink." His faro game had even in this brief fortnight earned the reputation of being the "squarest in Aspen," for Jack had registered a shockingly embellished oath to sell no more manufactured whisky, and to rest satisfied with the natural percentage that must come to the dealer in every banking game.

His change of manner was even more strongly commented upon. He exercised his usual careful supervison over all the branches of his nefarious business; he was as courtly as ever in his treatment of patrons; he permitted miners and blacklegs to slap him familiarly on the back, without a shrug of disapproval; but with it all every one remarked a serious change.

Some said he had developed a taste for religion, for a rumor that he had been seen coming out of church, on at least two occasions, gained much credence in sporting circles. Others declared him to be in love, for one of his barkeepers had caught him in the very act of conversing with "the young lady at Hopkins'," on the day preached only through the minister, that worthy must be interviewed without delay.

In less than half an hour Jack was knocking at the door of the parsonage, and the minister's wife, opening it, stood eying him with an inquiring glance.

"I want to see the parson."

"Who shall I say, please?"

"Er—ah—Mr. Thompson, of Denver, on most important business."

"Not the Rev. Mr. Thompson?"

"Well—er—no, mum, not exactly—er—I'm his brother."

"He will be glad to see you, I am sure. You will find him there in his study." And she indicated the direction of that sacred snuggery by a wave of her hand.

Jack entered the room and stood nervous and uncovered in the presence of the Rev. Joshua Sampson. He had far rather have faced a pair of loaded tiwobuns, but although he never for a moment lost his self-possession, he was doubtful as to how to begin the interview.

Finally Mr. Sampson broke the silence, which was beginning to grow painful:

"Mr. Thompson, of Denver, I think I heard you say?"

"Well—er—yes, I did say so, but, you see, I lied."

"And was that necessary, my good friend?" This with an expression of mingled surprise and pain.

"Yes, I reckon it was, because if I'd given yer my real name yer wouldn't a let me in. I'm Jack Bowdoin, the gambler, and I'm no good. Hold on, don't throw me out—I'll make it all right. Name yer price, and whatever it is I'll pay it; but I tell yer, Parson, I'm in trouble."

"Don't get excited, Mr. Bowdoin," retorted Mr. Sampson, kindly. "I had no intention of throwing you out, as you call it, and if you are in trouble it is my duty as a minister of the gospel to lend you a helping hand. You are welcome."

"What, me! Me welcome in the house of the dealer of a Bible game? But that one little word comin' from you opens a corner o' my heart I never knowed was there before. Now, look a-here, Parson; you ain't got yer church paid fur yet. You've been tryin' to raise a thousand dollars and can't do it. Well, I can, and there it is."

And taking a huge wallet from his coat pocket, he counted out the sum and spread it upon the table before the astonished Pastor.

"You're very kind, Mr. Bowdoin," said the good man, rather nervously, with a wistful glance at the money. "Magnanimous; in fact——"

"I know what you're goin' to say. You've refused money before that I won gamblin'. But supposin' my old mother had sent it to me to invest in just such a game?"

"I should receive it cheerfully and with thanks."

An inward sigh of relief that the intended lie had turned out only a white one, and he said:

"Then put it in your pocket, and say no more about it. I tell you, Parson, money talks every time, and we've got to get that there little church out o' debt."

The worthy pastor made no further objection, but after profuse thanks took the money from the table, placed it carefully in the drawer, opened his subscription book, and, with pencil in hand, said:

"I have noticed you in church on several occasions, Mr. Bowdoin, but never dreamed that you took so deep an interest in religious matters."

"Oh, yes, I always had a leanin' that way, and, on the dead, Parson, if I hadn't been forced into gamblin', so to speak, I'd a took to preachin', sure."

"I am sorry now that we thought best to refuse your first subscription. But, then, the Lord will provide, Mr. Bowdoin."

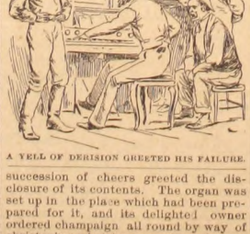
"Y-e-s; I heard you say that once before."

"By-the-by, what did you say was your mother's name?"

"Mary—Mary Clarissa Bowdoin."

"Thank you."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]



A YELL OF DERISION GREETED HIS FAILURE.

succession of cheers greeted the disclosure of its contents. The organ was set up in the place which had been prepared for it, and its delighted owner ordered champaign all round by way of christening, which was unanimously pronounced to be the most beautiful piece of furniture ever seen in Aspen.

"Is it better'n a pianner, Jack?" was asked.

"Better'n a pianner! Why, if a deuce is better'n an ace; if a fish-horn's better'n a brass band, so can this here machine give a pianner high, jack, game, and win out."

"Give us a tune, then," was suggested and echoed at once by a dozen voices.

"All right," cheerily responded Jack; "and if you fellers don't swear you never heard real music before in all yer lives, I'll give up every dollar I've got."

He sat before the instrument with an air of unwonted self-consciousness, and pressed his fingers upon the keys. But the $2,000 investment failed to give forth the slightest sound, and a yell of derision greeted his failure to produce the "only real music they had ever heard."

"Stuck, by thunder! The damned thing's a dummy, and the drinks are on me."

But the "Professor" came to his rescue, explained the use of keyboards, stops, pedals and bellows, and Jack made another attempt. The effect was electrical, and the success of the second effort most complete. It was indeed a weird, fantastic scene. As if by magic, every sound save that of the organ was hushed, and a hundred desperadoes stood gathered in restful attitudes around it, while this enthusiastic outcast, for the first time on record, played the holy strains of "Rock of Ages" in a Western gambling hell.

It is not the purpose of the writer to dwell upon the history of that organ at "The Little Casino," nor to particularize as to its many successful recitals. Suffice it to say that it proved the harbinger of a stupendous run of luck to Jack Bowdoin, and he made such a rapid advancement as an organist that within a month he committed to memory every selection he had heard in the little brown church.

To effect this result he was forced to pass through the same fiery ordeal of ministerial anathema whenever he attended service, and that was twice every Sunday. He felt that whenever the worthy pastor shook his finger at him and shouted the usual cumbersome platitudes, he was being held up before the congregation as a terrible example, but he bore it all patiently, and his uneasy twistings in his seat ceased whenever the choir began to sing. He drank in every sound of voice and organ with studious avidity, and when service was over he would duplicate them in "The Little Casino."

After a time he grew dissatisfied at the brevity and simplicity of his repertory, for the selections of the church choir had grown to be a tiresome series of repetitions. He purchased volume after volume of organ music and read the titles of hundreds of offertories, sonatas, and Te Deums by the great masters, but the notes were as unintelligible to him as the signs of the Cabala, and he was all the more helpless because the "Professor" could not read a note of music.

There was but one way out of what had grown to be a serious trouble; he must take lessons from the lady organist, and as she could be reached only through the minister, that worthy must be interviewed without delay.

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Shocking Tragedy in Franklin County—Three Lives Sacrificed—Expressage Free on Relief Funds—Needs of People in the Flooded District—Chicago's Apathy.

From Far and Near.

GOV. FIFER, during his personal inspection of the flooded district in Southern Illinois, got his system saturated with malaria. He was confined to his home for several days. He will go to West Baden Springs, Ind., for a few days for recuperation.

STATE TREASURER WILSON has been officially notified by the United States and the Pacific Express Companies that they will transmit free of charge all contributions of money sent him for food sufferers and all shipments of money made by the Treasurer for that purpose.

WILLIAM F. CLARK, aged 32, committed suicide at the residence of James Lyttleton, ten miles north of Mount Sterling, by taking morphine. Clark's wife had left him and he had been drinking heavily of late. His wife's former husband killed himself a few years ago by battering his brains out with a rock.

RUDOLPH HACKER, a Chicago cigarmaker, and Mrs. Louise Plum, were found dead in a room in the woman's house at Chicago. The gas was on full from the burners and a brace of revolvers was found upon a stand under the table. There was no mistake. That the man and woman had committed suicide.

THE bodies of two unknown people were taken from the lake by the Cottage Grove avenue police. The first one was that of a man about 35 years of age. The other was a woman about 35 years old, five feet five inches tall, had black hair and wore a black cashmere dress. Neither body bore marks of violence. The woman had evidently been in the water about two day and the man over a week.

JUDGE BURROUGHS, who lives in the heart of the flooded district, was in Chicago, and took that city to task for its indifference to the sufferings of the people. Many have been deprived of their homes and means of support. They are mostly tenant farmers, he says, and their houses, crops, machinery and stock have been destroyed. They are helpless, and the June floods are likely to render their condition still more deplorable. Chicago, moreover, is indebted to these people, according to Judge Burroughs, when that city was devastated by fire no one responded to her cry for help more promptly and more liberally than the dwellers along the now submerged Mississippi River bottoms. There is but one course open to the people of the city, if they wish to save themselves from lasting reproach. Liberal contributions of money and of the necessaries of life must be sent to the flood sufferers, and they must be continuously assisted until such a time as they shall be able to provide for themselves.

A DOUBLE murder and suicide occurred at Negdmore, a village in the extreme southeast part of Franklin County, which was caused by jealousy. Moses Taylor and F. Foster own adjoining farms, and for some time Taylor had been suspicious of Foster, thinking he had been paying too much attention to his wife, and became very jealous of him. Thursday afternoon Taylor met Foster on the road about a quarter of a mile east of Foster's house and hot words ensued. Taylor drew his revolver and shot Foster, afterward taking an ax and beating his head, from the effects of which he died about one hour afterward. Mrs. Taylor, seeing what had happened, fled to Foster's house for protection, but her husband followed her there. He shot her in the head, and she died immediately. Taylor then returned to within fifty yards of the spot where he killed Foster and killed himself with a bullet from the same weapon. It is thought here that Taylor was insane on account of his jealousy of Foster. The Taylors left four children. Foster was a single man, living with his mother.

A TRIP of several hundred miles through the central and "river" parts of the State during the past week furnishes ample data for remark and comment relative to the situation resulting from almost continuous rain, and while much has been said and written, it can be truthfully said that the half has not yet been told. In some of the most noted corn belt sections in the State, where in ordinary seasons the first of June finds three-fourths of the corn crop planted but up, and the busy cultivator active in exterminating weeds and grass between the well-defined rows of the basis of State wealth, these same sections present a rather gloomy aspect; in unplowed fields, unplanted if plowed, not up, or rotted if planted, and the entire country soaked and seen by previous rains or those almost constantly following. All the promise in these localities comes from the hill sides or other elevations, all of which have been specially attended to, and the trail of the team and planter through standing water and bottomless mud to reach the elevations and plant them to the water (or mud) edge can be clearly traced by the eye of the passenger as he is whirled along any time, provided the falling rain does not obstruct his range of vision. This brief descript on will answer with little variation for over two-thirds of the prairie cornfields of the State. The broad acreage of small grain has suffered greatly from standing water. Some fields where a part looks well will show streaks and patches of yellow, indicating the constant presence of water, while the most favored fields reveal an irregularity in height and development. No favorable condition of weather from now until harvest could remove the inevitable certainty of a greatly reduced yield and a possible deterioration of quality, notably of wheat and oats. Where not drowned out by lakes of water the pasturage and meadow lands show a rank growth, indicative of an immense crop of hay, provided it can be cared for at the proper time.

JOHN G. RANDIE, of Litchfield, was stricken with paralysis Tuesday. He was one of the early settlers of Montgomery County.

IT is now believed that Jerry Trumbley, the thug who assaulted Merchant Joseph Fish of Chicago and disfigured him for life, was hired to do it by an enraged and jealous woman.

A TERRIFIC rain and wind storm struck Mount Vernon. The wind blew at a frightful rate, and serious damage has been done in the surrounding country. The electric display in the heavens was something wonderful.

Shocking Accident.

Many people are busy making laces. In spite of the introduction of machine lace there are at least 1,000,000 workers in the various European countries.

An Army of Lacemakers.

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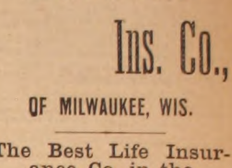

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$3.50 Police Shoe; Farmers, Railroad Men and Letter Carriers all wear them; also all seamless, smooth inside, heavy three soles extension edge. One pair will wear a year.

$2.50 fine calf; no better shoe ever offered at this price; one trial will convince those who want a shoe for comfort and service.

$2.25 and $2.00 Workingman's shoes are very strong and durable. Those who have given them a trial will wear no other make.

Boys' $2.00 and $1.75 school shoes are worn by the boys everywhere; they sell on their merits, as the wearer soon discovers.

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he following shows its restorative influence. F. A. Tenney says: "From 1885 to 1889 I was an invalid from enlargement of the liver. Tried medicine to no purpose. Commenced to drink Moxie, and cured me, so I am able to do hard work with ease. F. A. CHENEY.
34 Wieland Street, Chicago.

MOXIE CURES ST. VITUS DANCE.

Amelia Kunger, aged thirteen, had St. Vitus dance. Four years ago could not feed herself or even speak. Physicians could do nothing for her. We gave her Moxie, and she rapidly recovered good health. L. KUNGER.
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