

A Detective's Story

An officer in a reminiscent mood writes to the Cincinnati *Enquirer* the following: You are aware that people who indulge their appetites to excess for strong drink, and who garner the excitement of the gaming-table, are apt to form unreasonable and highly erroneous impressions even regarding their best friends. It happened that my young hero, whose name was John O'Brown, obtained the idea that I had something to do with his adoption of the life of a gambler. He imagined that his family had disowned him therefore and that his intended wife had married another man because of his dissolute habits. One evening as I was sitting in my room congratulating myself upon having lived a useful and ornamental life, and planning how I could perform several acts of benevolence without being detected, the door suddenly flew open with a crash in obedience to the mandate of an enthusiastic and industrious foot, and, to my consternation, there stood before me, attired in blood-shot eyes, nobody but John O'Brown. He held a double-action revolver of uncomfortable caliber in one hand and a Chinese laundry ticket in the other.

“‘I have come to kill you!’ he exclaimed, as he stood in front of me rocking to and fro from the effects of a debauch that must have lasted about eight days. As he swayed to and fro like a cobra de capello preparing to strike, his eyes leered at me in a most suggestive way, and I saw that I must act quickly or not at all.

“‘I am going to shoot you dead in one minute,’ he went on to state, and he began to steady himself to take aim at me. It was a dread moment for me I had had no weapon, and if I had one I could not have brought it to bear upon my young friend ere he had filled me full of holes. All at once I remembered John's penchant for gambling. I concluded to try any experiment that I felt sure would succeed. In fact, so certain was I of the success of my proposed scheme that I regained my composure and was in an instant as cool as ever I was in my life. Said I to John O'Brown:

“‘You say that you are going to shoot me, John?’

“‘That's what I said.’

“‘Then, I'll bet you \$100 to \$10 that you don't shoot me,’ said I.

“‘I'll go you,’ he replied.

“‘Put up,’ said I.

“‘All right,’ said he.

“‘Let's go and get somebody to hold the stakes,’ said I.

“‘Come on,’ said he.

“He fell into the trap. The odds caught him, and his passion for gambling saved my life, for when we found the men I wanted to hold the stakes they disarmed John and persuaded him to desist.”

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