

## Some Day I'll Win

IT had always been a custom among the five members of the Stock-Exchange's Board of Directors to meet in the evening at half past seven at the "Four Hundred Club." After a general exchange of opinions with regard to the standing of the market, comment of the last bill, having passed by Congress and "small talk" over political business, they began to play cards till three of them had won a game each. The two losers had to arrange the program for the evening amusement and cover the expenses.

But as nothing lasts forever, that custom came one day to an end. It happened when one of the five was nominated to the Presidency of a Railroad company and his place taken by a very conspicuous man in the business-world.

The new member, Mr. Dagobert Foster, was known in the Stock-Exchange as "The Mystic," though there was not one who dared to call him by such a name.

Mr. Dagobert Foster was a man of about fifty years, affable in his manner, exact in his business. He was always ready to give advice and personal help to those who through ambition or inexperience lost their money by a change of the market, as well as to smile on, and congratulate those who met with success. But no one ever had a chance to give him either condolence or congratulations. His immutable face, no matter what might happen to him, never showed the smallest alteration. A man of few-words and right-to-the-point. Anger was not in his temper and reason was the only law that governed his actions.

Some of his associates said he was an Englishman, others, a Frenchman, from the fact that he was a master in both languages. But nobody was able to ascertain his origin or past life. The only thing known about him was, that ten years before, he had appeared in the Stock-Exchange; and having been introduced by

himself there was some alarm among the members, to which he really paid very little attention. During the first week he devoted himself to the study of the market, and endeavored to obtain an acquaintance with the most prominent members. And those who spoke to him were highly impressed with his knowledge in every branch of business, and they asserted he came from London, where he began his commercial career.

Immediately he began work, and not many months had passed before he was an authority in the Exchange. With the security of a man who knows perfectly what he is doing, he never took a false step. More than once he foretold a rise or fall in prices, and in transactions where other had failed, he succeeded. He formed trusts and corporations; the Government called on him to contract with them for a loan. He never failed to meet his obligations and his name alone was a guarantee. And all this accomplished in the short lapse of a few years, made him appear a superior man, who had in his hands the reins of the whole world-market, and complete knowledge of men and things.

So it is easily understood that his nomination for the vacant seat in the Board of Directors of the Stock-Exchange, was received with general approbation and without wonder.

---

The day after the nomination of Mr. Dagobert Foster as a member of the Stock-Exchange's Board of Directors, the five members met as usual at half past seven in the hall of the "Four Hundred Club," where Mr. Louis Hill, first member of the committee, introduced the new arrival to his friends.

It was about nine o'clock, after the usual conversation and exchange of opinions, when Mr. Hill said:

Well gentlemen, it is growing late, so let us play our games. I propose that "tonight's program" may be a great one in order to celebrate the advent of Mr. Foster". He called a waiter and asked for a new pack of cards.

Presently he turned toward the new member; "I forgot to tell you, Mr Foster"—and he explained that the custom was to play and the idea of it.

For the first time since they knew him, they saw his face reflect a feeling. He turned pale and said:

"Well, Mr. Hill, I feel very sorry to disappoint you. I do not play cards."

"Oh! don't bother yourself about that. We will teach you the game in five minutes. It is simple."

"That is not the question," replied Foster smiling. "I know how to play very well, but I can not play. If you had told me at the first, your custom, I would not have accepted my nomination."

"But, Mr. Foster," interrupted Hill, "I think there is nothing in our custom to be considered unworthy".

"Doubtless, that is true and consequently I have to give you a reason for my refusal." replied Foster.

Mr. Hill looked at the other three habitue of the assembly, and Mr. Foster proceeded.

"I have taken an oath by which, never again I would play cards. But you say that is a fact, and not a reason—don't you gentlemen?"

"To tell you the reason I have to relate the life of an old friend, and for that I need your consent."

"It is granted," they answered together.

"In the village of Cambridge in England", Mr. Foster went on, "resided, about twenty-five years ago, a lawyer with his wife and their only son Richard. Richard was a very bright boy and the pride of his parents. From his childhood he demonstrated a great tendency for his father's profession, and when he was but 18 years old, he received the degree of B. A.

"Then it was resolved that he should become a lawyer, and his father sent him to Paris in order to study International Law, and to get a perfect knowledge of the French language.

"During two years Richard devoted himself to the study and made wonderful progress, obtaining in his second year the best notes among all his confreres. Being a stranger and an intelligent young man, who had money and belonged to a good family, he had many friends, not only among his fellow-students but also in the high society of the French capital.

"He was a member of "La Garonne Club," where



he was in the habit of going in order to see some friend or to spend the evening in a pleasant chat. But never had he passed the doorway of the "green-room", as they used to call the part of the building dedicated to gambling.

"One night an intimate friend of his invited him to play as partners. Richard refused, but somebody said: "Take the chance; I don't know why, I think you will win." He refused again, but at last accepted, gave the money to his friend and went with him to the "green-room."

"That night contrary to what usually happens to those who play for the first time, he lost his money, and the occurrence was soon known throughout the Club.

"The friend who had invited him said: "Richard has very bad luck; it is the first time I have seen a person lose money on his debut." Richard protested saying, "Tomorrow I'll show you the bad luck was yours, not mine. I will play alone."

"Next night he played and lost; likewise for four consecutive nights. Then he got angry and had one only ambition—"to win once." If anyone said to him. "You must not play any more Richard," he would answer, "Some day I'll win, then I shall not play any more."

"He became a regular gambler but fortune never smiled on him. At the beginning he spared some time to study; at the last he devoted all his time to the game. He lost all the money he had, sold his jewellery and dresses, asked more money from his father and lost again. Then he got in debt, which he offered to pay on a fixed date; and being unable to accomplish his promise the matter went over to the court. A friend of his wrote to his father, explaining to him Richard's situation.

"Such unexpected news caused great consternation at home; and his poor mother who had been heart-sick for a long time, died as a result of the shock. His father went to Paris and took him back to England.

"For a few months he led a quiet life and obtained a position in London, but could not forget his poor

luck ; the idea of "winning once" was always in his mind. He now wished not only to win "once" but also to win back more than he had already lost. For a big game he needed big money, so one Saturday when the manager of the office sent him to collect some bills, he did not return. He went to the Club and—lost.

"On this occasion the notice reached his father too late and when the old man arrived at London, Richard was already sentenced, and in jail. It was a terrible stroke to Richard's father ; however being a good lawyer, he himself made an appeal before the court and his son was discharged. When he addressed the Judge, in his heart-rendering speech, pleading for Richard's irresponsibility, he said ;

"The fault is all mine. I left him to take care of himself when he was but a boy and gave him to the world when I ought to have guarded him day and night, against that same world. So, now I pray you give him to me again and I will retire from the bar, and devote the rest of my life to guide him, and make him a responsible member of the community."

"But all this was too much for the old man. He left the bar that day never to return, leaving for Cambridge with Richard, where he soon after died of melancholy.

"Richard being alone in the world and with only one ambition, his 'once' converted all his property into money and went to Paris. He paid no attention to his good friends' warnings, but gambled again and—lost.

"When he had parted with all his money he withdrew from "La Garonne Club" to the gambling-den. One night when he was not playing because he had no money, but watching the game with febrile eyes, a sudden cry was heard—"The police."

"The lights were shut off and the gamblers ran leaving behind their money, cards and chips in an effort to flee. Then came the command : "Stop," which was followed by a shot. The confusion was terrible, Richard tried to escape through a window, but lost his balance and fell to the pavement breaking an arm and bruising his head.



"He was taken to the hospital under arrest, but the physician in charge, who happened to be one of his old schoolmates, pitied him and reported to the judge that Richard was in a very grave condition as the result of the fall and that the head wound would have to be submitted to a special treatment. He asked permission to take personal care of the patient.

"This good friend lodged Richard in his own house. In a short time he cured his wounds and with advice and promises of help endeavored to cure his soul

"One day about seven o'clock in the evening, while they were conversing together, the telephone rang. "A man was badly hurt and the doctor was requested at the hospital."

"Wait for me," said the Doctor taking his hat "we shall have supper together."

"Richard was alone in the office. He walked around looking at the pictures, going over to the desk for a newspaper. A drawer was open and in the drawer he saw a roll of bank-notes. For a moment he gazed at the money, and a thought came to his mind, "My 'once'; if I play today I'll win." Before he had considered the consequences of his action, the money was in his pocket, his hat on and he was rushing through the streets.

"I am sure" he was thinking "I am going to win. I will put the money back and never will I play again."

"He did not count the money, he was in a hurry always thinking, "I am going to win." He did not wait for the electric car because it stopped at every corner, and he was in a hurry. He ran more than a mile without stopping once, without looking at anything. On the way an automobile almost crushed him, he collided twice with people passing, but he did not stop to apologise; he was in a hurry, always thinking "I am going to win."

"At last, breathless, almost exhausted he arrived at "La Garonne Club",—the place where he had left his fortune. He ran upstairs, and into the "green-room". On the bacaret-table was a vacant seat; the game was going on in great scale.

"With livid face and trembling body, he seated himself on the chair, took the money from the pocket and threw it upon the table. The money fell upon the square "against the banker."

"Richard crossed his arms on the table, leaned his head upon the arms and thought: "Now I am going to win."

"The banker counted the money: 5,000 francs. He hesitated for a moment, and said, "The bank is done."

"The cards were thrown and the banker lost. The next thrown, again lost. For the third time the game was repeated. Then the other gamblers retired their money, Richard alone spoke not a word. The banker played three times more and on all them Richard won. Still he was motionless in the same position, as when the first play was made.

"Gentlemen, I am bankrupt. That man" said the banker pointing to Richard "has got me with his foolish game. I have lost 160,000 francs. Give him the news because I think he is sleeping."

"Ha! you, lucky fellow," said the gambler who was beside him "take your money". Richard did not answer. He shook him by the arm, and got the same reply.

"Then——

"He was dead," said Hill and the others three members, without giving Foster time to finish the story.

"Yes; he won once and never played again." answered Foster.

"But, are you and Richard the——? somebody asked.

"No!" ended Mr. Foster "Richard was really dead, but it was I who invited him to play the first time.

RAFAEL VILLASUSO Y. VILLAYERDE.

---

Histories make men wise, poets witty; the mathematics, subtle; natural philosophy, deep, moral, grave; logic and thetoric, ablt to contend.