



# CAMEO KIRBY

BY BOOTH TARKINGTON AND HARRY LEON WILSON  
NOVELIZED FROM THE PLAY BY W.B.M. FERGUSON



(CONTINUED.)

## CHAPTER XI.

"WHAT secret?" demanded Aaron, for at the magic name "Moreau" his companion and he were instantly all attention. "What secret?" he again peremptorily demanded.

"I see them speak together sly," said Poulette, nodding her head and screwing up her eyes in a manner that boded ill for the amative and untruthful Mr. Croup. "I can tell that you do not wish you to see. Then when you come from dinner Colonel Moreau he hand this to Croup behind the door. Croup he keep it in he breast pocket until he fall asleep on porch just now. I have look. It is all those camels—" "Camels?" A cry echoed Aaron, with raised eyebrows.

"Oul, miche," confidently nodded Poulette, evidently no whit amazed at the idea of the spotted handkerchief being able to accommodate such criminals. "All those camels the colonel gentleman wear when he is come, wear them on his fob chain." And she opened the spotted handkerchief.

"Comeos, M. Aaron!" exclaimed Anatole, an exultant light leaping to his eyes. "See, there they are. Now I know. You saw Colonel Moreau when he started for that meeting this morning. You saw him when Tom Randall has meeting this morning. You saw him when Tom Randall has give him that pistol of his father's to go and kill—who? But one man—Cameo Kirby!" he cried, leveling his arm at the startled Aaron.

And, as if further proof were needed, evidence which proved beyond a doubt the sinister identity of the unwelcome guest, Croup entered with a note, which he handed to M. Veaudry. "Man on horseback ride all de way from de city wif it," he explained.

Hastily scanning it, the young creole handed it in silence to Mr. Randall, and the latter read:

I have one more clue to run down, but I shall follow this within the hour. I hear a rumor that Colonel Moreau took the journey with you this morning. If this is true, secure his portmanteau, and if he is still at the plantation do not allow him to quit the place till I come. Use any means to prevent his leaving. Do not hesitate at force. Colonel Moreau was murdered this morning by Cameo Kirby.

Aaron gravely returned the letter to his companion, and for a long moment the two men looked at each other in silence. Then M. Veaudry quietly placed the paper in his pocket, turned on his heel and strode from the room, Mr. Randall obediently following. At last they had arrived at a complete understanding regarding the identity and disposition of the troublesome guest who boldly masqueraded under the name of Colonel Moreau. That no words had been necessary testified to the sinister character of the resolve upon which they had mutually determined.

From the balcony Larkin Bunce, chewing impatiently on his cheroot, waited for Adele to leave the drawing room. It was imperative that he should have a final word with Kirby. Escaping from the music room before the others, he had been in time to catch a glimpse of Aaron Randall's face as the latter followed M. Veaudry, and the sight had not been a comforting one, the old gambler feeling assured that something untoward had happened. It would not have surprised him if their respective identities had at last been discovered.

"I knowed we'd get it if we stayed," he commented gloomily. "I wonder if this means it's come," growling at

Aaron's retreating back. And yet, looking through the window, he discerned Kirby seated at the card table negligently toying with the pasteboards and frittering away the time with Adele as if secure in the peace and happiness of his own home. Such indifference was maddening, inexplicable, and the old gambler, with a final imprecation, decided that the moment Adele had gone he would convey a last warning to his partner, and if it was still unheeded he would then think of his own safety and, however difficult it would prove, leave Kirby to the fate he deserved.

Meanwhile that gentleman was calmly pursuing his dialogue with Adele. "You ask me if I am sorry I did not go," he was saying. "Miss Randall, what is a man who acts against all the reason he has?"

"Sometimes he is a hero," she replied, steadily meeting his eyes. "And sometimes he's a fool," he added grimly. "Things come so suddenly sometimes that you can hardly get your breath quick enough to tell what to do. Yet," he added musingly, "you



HE DISCERNED KIRBY SEATED AT THE CARD TABLE.

do know all the time, underneath, what you ought to do. For instance, I know that I ought not to be here now. I haven't any right. And then, I ought to be hunting the man who stole a silver mounted pistol at the oats this morning."

"But you can't do that," she expostulated, nodding wisely. "Your friends would—"

"Miss Randall, I've got only one friend in the world, and he's out there on the balcony swearing cuss words at me because I don't go."

She turned away, evincing sudden and vital interest in a book she had read twice over and knew by heart.

"Do you think you have a right to say that you have only one friend?" she asked gently.

"I—I hadn't thought of you as a friend, Miss Randall."

"Why? How do you think of me?" suddenly facing him, her eyes half timid, half daring, demanding a sincere answer.

"Why—just as you, Miss Adele—and I ought not to think of you at all."

"Do you mean because this unjust charge is hanging over you? Do you think I care for that? Is there any other reason?"

He nodded, permitting the cards to fall from his hand one by one to the table. "Yes; there is another reason. You remember what Mercutio said of

his wound—'Tis neither as deep as a well nor as wide as a church door, but 'twill serve. Ask for me tomorrow; you shall find me a grave man.' The bad prince ought not to stay too long, you know."

She seated herself at the table and scrutinized him with grave, troubled eyes, her chin resting daintly on the crux of arched hands. "You must make it clearer to me than that. What are you afraid of my finding out?"

He shrugged and smiled. "Life makes some pretty queer shuffles, Miss Randall, and you can't fool much with the deck yourself," he said, somewhat irreverently, picking up the cards and unconsciously beginning to riffle them. "If you don't play the game square it's only a question of time till you get caught, and then nobody will play with



"PERHAPS WITH ONE WOMAN HE COULDN'T BE BEATEN."

you. I don't know why Life dealt me the hand I hold. All I know is I've got to play the cards according to rule. Sometimes I've found that mighty hard. I keep wishing and wishing there'd be a different hand dealt, but wishing won't change it. It was the shuffle that settled it long ago."

"I don't think, sir, that you've said anything that concerns you and me very much," she commented, glancing up shyly.

"Concerns you and me," he echoed sadly, and, rising, he began to pace the room. "Miss Randall, let me tell you something," he added at length, halting and regarding her fixedly. "One evening toward sunset I was leaning over the rail of a Mississippi river steamboat, and not finding much pleasure in what I was thinking about, I put my hand casually into my pocket and drew out a deck of playing cards, cards that had been used—well, considerably. I contemplated them a moment and then let them fall from my hand. They dropped into the water in a kind of little shower. And then a curious thing happened. Those shabby old playing cards floated alongside a rosebush all in bloom that somebody had evidently planted too near a caving back upstream. It seemed as if they kind of hoped to go along with it on its journey, but it didn't look right. The rosebush was too pretty for bad companions like that. And then, one by one, those shabby playing cards, lying on their backs in the water, began to sink under and drown. Then along came an eddy and caught that pretty rosebush and swung it out into the current, and away it went down the stream, happy and

proud in just a glory of sunshine and sparkle. It served those old playing cards right. They ought to have been drowned for trying to keep company so high above them. That's what I thought looking down from the boat's rail."

Without conscious effort or any attempt at elocution Kirby had told the little allegory with simple feeling and sincerity, his manner growing more abstracted until at the conclusion it seemed as if he were speaking to his inner self, taking counsel with all that was best in him. Silence ensued, while Adele looked dreamily away, and he continued to stare at the cards, but seeing them not.

"Does a man always stop to think whether he has a right or not?" she ventured at length, speaking so low that he strained forward to catch the words.

"Doesn't a woman always want him to?" he gravely returned.

"Ah, but there is something a woman wants a man to do more than that—she wants him not to give up anything till—he is beaten," she whispered.

"Suppose he is the kind of man that ought to be beaten?"

She arose, throwing the scarf about her shoulders, and walked meditatively to the door.

"But mightn't it be perhaps—perhaps with one woman," she whispered, "he couldn't be beaten even then?"

Astonished at her own daring, she gave a little gasp, then incontinently fled, while Kirby stood staring after her, frowning to interpret her words. He turned with a start as Bunce strode through the balcony window.

"Well, have you told her goodby?" snapped Larkin, who had interpreted the foregoing passage as a species of farewell.

"No," said Kirby violently, irritated at the interruption.

"Well, I reckon it's about time to sit down and take a good hard think," warned the other, pacing the room like an excited sentry. "Do you think you could git this girl?" he continued, with heavy sarcasm. "How about it when she finds out who you are—Cameo Kirby?"

"Easy on that name, Larkin!"

"Easy on the name!" bellowed Bunce, appealing to the ceiling. "Why, it's been shriekin' through this house ever since you got here. There's been two folers within ten feet of you all the time who never took their eyes off'n you—that young Veaudry and Aaron Randall. Do you reckon they think you're Colonel Moreau? Why, I seen them leave the house a short spell back, and I'd be willin' to bet my immortal soul they're on our makeups and are plannin' to raise h— with us. I tell you this place is gittin' too hot for Larkin Bunce. You haven't said goodby to her? Well, then, I'll say goodby to you. Somebody's got to be loose. I wouldn't be no good to you—nor to me either—in jail. For the last time," he pleaded, making an imploring gesture with his trembling hands, "are you comin' with me?"

Kirby, who had quietly resumed his place at the table, now slowly shuffled the deck and carefully inspected the card that had turned up.

"No," he said, with grave finality. "I'm not going with you, my friend. The hand's dealt; I'll play it out."

"For God's sake, Gene," implored Bunce. "Then I got to quit you. You know what this means to me," he added despairingly. "I hate to go, but there's no sense in my stayin'."

"No. And I thank you for staying as long as you have," interrupted Kirby, with a smile, rising and placing his hand on the other's shoulder. "I'm afraid I haven't been thinking very much of you, old partner. But I'm going to stay—call it what you like. However, this is not your hand, Larkin, and I don't want you to help me play it out. Go, by all means, and at once. Did you get a fresh horse?"

"A fresh horse? Why, I wouldn't even durst to ask for the one I come on," cried Bunce, mopping his face. "You don't seem to rightly size up the mess we're in, Gene. I'll be lucky to git out on my own two feet. I don't even know where they put my hat, and I'm skeered to ask for it. Then it ain't no more use my askin' you to come."

"No more use than in your stayin'," said Kirby.

Bunce hesitated for a moment, then thrust out his huge hand.

"Goodby, you durned fool!" he gasped, choking up.

"Goodby, Larkin, but don't bet that it is goodby. They won't get me. I'll ride your horse into town for you tomorrow."

Bunce bestowed a final helpless appeal upon the ceiling, gave his partner's hand a farewell wrench, then lumbered hastily from the room, while Kirby, humbling softly to himself, strolled to the open window and, leaning negligently against his frame, gave himself up to retrospection.

He wanted to be alone; he wanted to think, to dream, to go over and over again every word that Adele had spoken, every smile, every gesture. His thoughts were solely of the immediate present and past. For the future he

did not care—neither Tom Randall's homecoming nor his own inevitable unmasking. He wondered what he would have been, what the end would have been, had his early life been laid in pleasanter lines—less harsh, less lonely. Yes, utter loneliness was a great and sinister factor in molding man's destiny. What if the last of the Kirbys had proved an honor to the old name, instead of a professional river gambler? And why was he remaining? Was not the allegory of the rosebush too bitterly true? Why had Adele said those last words: "But mightn't it be perhaps with one woman he couldn't be beaten, even then?"

Yes, it might be, and it would be, and the truth of it had been proved since the beginning of time. But, even if she were willing and knew him for what he was, could he rightly ask the sacrifice? Yet those words had awakened a fierce longing, had held out a promise of hope. And he could not utterly renounce, not just yet. Perhaps—

He turned as a hand tugged at his sleeve, turned to confront old Croup, who had stolen noiselessly to his side.

"Marse Gene, fo' Gawd's sake look out!" whispered Croup, his face gray with anxiety, his voice trembling with suppressed excitement. "I's feared it's too late fo' yo' to git away. Marse Anatole done ride out de stable lak he's crazy, an' if yo' listen to de quiet out yonneh yo' kind hear hosses a-comin' down de big road, an' dey comin' on de gallop, Marse Gene. Old Croup mighty skeered fo' yo', honey."

Kirby turned an attentive ear toward the softly stealing south wind—that harbinger of danger. Yes, the hoof beats were now insistently audible, drawing nearer and nearer with every passing second. More than one horse, too—say a dozen, if he was any judge.

"Thank you for the warning, Croup," he said quietly, preserving his attitude of idle indifference as if discussing the most trivial commonplace. "I quite agree with you that it is too late to think of escape."

(To be continued.)

## \$85,000 GUNS TO LAST 70 ROUNDS

Uncle Sam's Armament For New Dreadnoughts Expensive.

### TONNAGE FIGURES ENORMOUS

Two New Battleships Greater Than Entire American Fleet at Time of Spanish War—Fourteen Inch Rifles Largest in History of World's Warfare and Most Costly.

At its last session the congress authorized the construction of two titanic ships of war and stipulated that they be armed with fourteen inch rifles, the most powerful weapons yet constructed. These guns cost \$85,000 each, and although it seems incredible, yet it is no less true that under the excessive pressures of battle conditions the life of these expensive weapons is only seventy rounds.

The distinctive features of these Dreadnoughts lie in the tremendous battery which they are designed to carry and the increased size which the increase in the weight and power of the main battery has made necessary.

The plans contemplate a displacement of about 27,000 tons as against the 20,000 of the Delaware and the North Dakota, America's pioneer battleships of the Dreadnought type, which were but recently commissioned.

Greater Than 1898 Fleets. The united tonnage of the giant twins is far greater than was our entire battleship tonnage at the time of the war with Spain, including even the Maine, whose destruction brought about the war. The fleet that blockaded Santiago was reckoned as a formidable one in its day, the battle line comprising the superb Iowa, the heavily armed and armored Indiana, Massachusetts and Oregon and the hard fighting old Texas.

So much for the size of the two new vessels. Turn now to their armament. The plans contemplate a battery of ten fourteen-inch rifles for each ship. These weapons are by far the most powerful ever constructed for any navy, greatly exceeding in range and hitting power the twelve inch guns with which the Delaware and the North Dakota are armed.

With a weight of 63.3 tons the new gun is more than ten tons heavier than the twelve inch type carried by the Dreadnoughts that the United States now has in commission. The weight of the projectile which the new gun will carry is 1,400 pounds. The

weight of the powder charge will be about 450 pounds. The designed muzzle energy of the new weapon is 65,000 foot tons.

Example is Appalling. To translate this into plainer English and to afford some idea of what this power means, let the reader suppose the 16,000 tons of the battleship Connecticut emplaced on top of the Lusitania, whose displacement is 32,500 tons, and the biggest of the Fall River steamboats superimposed on top of all. Next try to conceive of the united weight of the three and the power that would be required to lift them. The muzzle energy of this gun exerted at the moment of discharge is so tremendous that it would be able to lift all three vessels one foot.

The mechanism of the carriage must in the fraction of a second take up and absorb a shock equal to that of a heavy engine and five Pullman coaches running at a speed of seventy miles an hour and brought to a sudden stop—a stop as sudden as though such a train had smashed into a stone wall. On leaving the muzzle of the gun the shell has an energy equivalent to that of a train or cars weighing 580 tons and running at sixty miles an hour.

This energy is sufficient to send the projectile through twenty-two and one-half inches of the hardest of steel armor at the muzzle, while at a range of 3,000 yards the projectile, moving at the rate of 2,235 feet per second, can pierce eighteen and one-half inches of steel armor at normal impact.

Life Is Seventy Rounds. One of the ordnance experts of the navy made some calculations which go to show that if one of these new fourteen inch rifles was constantly submitted to excessive pressure, such as might obtain in a hot action, the gun could not last more than seventy rounds.

The length of the gun is a fraction more than 53 feet—64 inches, to be exact. Although the muzzle velocity of the projectile is 2,600 feet a second, the ordnance experts have figured that it requires one-tenth of a second for the shell to leave the gun, this because of the fact that the shell moves from zero to 2,600 feet and that the mean velocity must be taken. This mean being one-tenth of a second, the actual gas life of this \$85,000 weapon is shown to be only seven seconds.

Judging from the performance of the twelve inch guns, these greater weapons should be able to deliver three shots a minute. If all ten guns of the projected Dreadnought should be brought into action and should maintain that rapidity of fire for one hour the cost of the ammunition expended in the hour would reach the enormous sum of \$2,520,000, or about one-fourth of the vessel's entire cost.

Small and Taste. The sense of smell is most nearly allied to that of taste. Hearing and seeing depend upon nerve responses to vibrations in the air and in the ether. In order to taste a substance it has to be wholly or partially dissolved; in order to smell a substance it must encounter the olfactory organs as a vapor, an emanation, a cloud of particles arising from odoriferous matter.

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**Edmund Kean** was playing in "Richard III," and the part of Catesby had to be taken by a low comedian, who sauntered on to the stage at the wrong moment and uttered the famous words, "My lord, the Duke of Buckingham is taken," in the wrong place. Edmund clinched his fists in rage, but otherwise took no notice of the remark.

Later the comedian repeated the words in the right place, and when the king expressed surprise at the news Catesby foisted his arms, walked boldly down the stage and remarked to the great actor in loud tones: "I told you so before, Mr. Kean, but you wouldn't believe me."

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