CAMEO KIRBY

By Booth Tarkington and Harry Leon Wilson

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When the girl had rejoined Kirby in the garden, M. Veaudry, who had been an interested spectator of the little tableau, exchanged with his companion a significant glance of grave sus-

"He mus' have changed quickly, this colonel, since you saw him this morning," he commented dryly. "I think-But who is this gentleman?" turning to confront Larkin Bunce, who, mopping his inflamed face with a dusty sleeve, had thrown himself from his weary horse and boldly entered the In fact, he had ridden at a breakneck pace all the way from New Orleans.

"Your servant, sir," he greeted, bowing to Aaron. "I'm lookin' for the gentleman who come here in the carriage with the ladies."

"Ah." exclaimed Mr. Randall, closely scanning the other, "you're the gentieman who came to see Colonel Moreau this morning. Do you wish to see him now?"

Bunce started violently, turning as pale as his overheated condition permitted. "Good God, no!" he exclaim-

"But it was Colone; Moreau who accompanied the ladies," explained Aaron. "And, sir, here he is now." The old gambler turned with a sub

dued exclamation of alarm, as if fully expecting to see the ghost of the late lamented Moreau. But instead his startled eyes met those of his partner, who, humming softly to himself, was calmly approaching, a white camellia in his hand.

"Come, cheer up, Mr. Bunce. I hope I see you well," greeted Kirby. Then, politely turning to Aaron, he added: "Mr. Bunce is confused. His long ride in the heat has been too much for him. Mr. Bunce is my-secretary. He looks robust, but is, in fact, very delicate. Might I so far trespass upon your hospitality as to beg a cooling draft for

Aaron bowed gravely and, accompanied by M. Veaudry, retired indoors. They had hardly left when Bunce's long repressed emotion overcame him.

"A coolin' draft," he echoed, with violent scorn. "I want a drink, and let it be strong, friend. I always knowed you was a fool, Gene Kirby, but I never knowed it was as bad as this. All the names in the

world to pick from, and you chose the name of Jack Moreau! Why, dog my

"Chance, Larkin, chance," returned Kirby, quite unmoved. "It was the angel of chance who gave me the why we do not know whose plantation

other, his voice faint with the violence of his sarcasm. "Darned if I ain't lost of unspeakable fear and loathing. my hearin'. I'll be dogged if I ain't delirious. Skin me if it don't seem like I'm settin' out in a garden and hearin' he?" asked Kirby steadily. Gene Kirby talkin' about angels. It he says. Him-Cameo Kirby! Poor she returned. old Gene Kirby! Why, you mush grily, "don't you know that Tom Randall's been raisin' h- all over Noo Or- bitterness. leans, tryin' to run you down?"

"Well, what of it?" and mopped his inflamed face anew. "He asks me what of that," he wailed to the surrounding scenery. "You pore, wanderin' lunatic! You know blame well that of all places on earth this is the last you should have tum- Kirby might never intend to claim the bled into. Now." with sudden energy plantation"and decision, "git ready to git outquick! My hoss is dead beat, but git mently, shaking her head. "He is too your angel to loan you one and slope infamous. But I don't want to think for the river. I'll catch you up at of him today. A change has come

But Kirby calmly refused the proffered riding whip.

"What's all the reason I shouldn't stay here?" he demanded. "Why should I expect danger from these people-Mme. Davezac, a Miss Pleydell and her father, a creole named

Veaudry and a Miss Adele"—
"Miss Adele who?" bellowed Bunce. "I don't know. That's all I've heard them call her."

Here the fates again intervened in the name of procrastination, for before Bunce could inform his partner that he was the guest of the family which, thanks to the efforts of Colonel Moreau, was his sworn enemy the ladies entered, and to the fleshy gambler's infinite disgust, anger and misery he was again promptly introduced by Kirby as "my secretary." Moreover, despite his utmost efforts he eventually found himself pledged to remain the

"But I dursn't do it, ma'am," he had expostulated to the smiling and indomitable Mme Davezac. "Me and Kirby-I mean me and Colonel Moreau got to git right out of here. There's some mighty pressin' business waitin' for us-'specially for him,

"Ah, but you will make pos'pone that business.", she returned. "I've al- bearing, the cause of which was as ready had your horse taken to the sta- yet beyond her understanding. Kirby

Adapted From the Play of the Same Name by W. B. M. Ferguson

AINSLEE MAGAZINE COMPANY

bles. Colonel Moreau, he says he will do us the honor to dine with us and remain the night, and that decides it. You are his friend and secretar'- So I shall see you at dinner, M. Bunce. Croup, the gentleman's room."

.....

And Larkin, making an uncouth bow, swallowed his curses and followed the old servant. Passing Kirby, he breathed scornfully, "If I was some people I'd find out more about other people." Alone with Adele, Kirby leaned against the old sundial and attentively watched her deftly arrange in the basket her freshly gathered bunch of

"Your friend evidently thinks you are not safe here," she said at length. "But you won't go? I-I know you are safe here."

"I doubt it." he calmly interrupted. "Why?" sharply, looking up with startled, wounded eyes.

"Because you are giving me a longer time to remember your kindness than I expected, and I'm afraid I'm finding that that isn't the safest thing in the world for me."

"Great danger in that, sir?" she gayly asked. He joined in her laugh, but his eyes were half serious. "People who play

with fire"-"Ah, but I don't believe you are s coward, sir. Of what was your friend

afraid?" "Well, mainly he seemed disturbed because I didn't know your name," smiled Kirby.

"But you do." "Pardon, I don't. This is the first time I've been alone with you since we started. I've only heard you called Miss Adele.' I don't even know whose

plantation this is." "Neither-do-we," she added sadly. 'I_I want to show you something.' And, as if yielding to a sudden impulse, she unfastened from about her neck a jeweled miniature and handed

it to her companion. Kirby instantly recognized it as portrait of the late John Randall, and in a breath the full significance of Bunce's observations came to him. Amazed, he looked from the miniature to Adele, then to the house and back again to her. Observing his emotion. she whispered, "You knew my fa-

"I met him-once," replied Kirby,

taking a deep breath. "I was proud of him," she continued steadily, refastening the miniature about her neck, "and I am not the less proud of him now. You have heard Then you un how he died? this is; that we hold it at the mercy "Angels? Angels?" caught up the of-Cameo Kirby" She dragged forth the name with an accent and gesture

"Your brother took Moreau's word for what happened that night, didn't

"Certainly. Had not Colonel Moreau sounded jest like his voice. 'Angels,' shown himself my father's friend?"

"It seems to me that Moreau's word brained chucklehead," he finished an- has gone for a good deal with your toward her, while he smiled half cynfamily," he commented, with veiled

Bunce, making a gesture eloquent of turer who lives by gambling," she ness in his character that he doesn't despair, feebly sought the garden seat asked, with some asperity, "any one's quit before she has the chance to. In the weakness of a good man like my risk" father?"

> "But has it ever occurred to you," he returned quietly, "that possibly this

"No! No!" she interrupted veheover me, and-and somehow the world is a different place"- She stopped and then, with flushed cheeks and hurried breath, added: "I feel as if I had been living a long time in the shadows-shadows full of darkness and ugly thoughts. But it has lifted today somehow. What is it?"

She turned, asking the question with wondering eyes, her face transfigured. And as if the heavens, bearing out her statement, offered a sign which presaged future peace and happiness, a surcease from all tribulation and suffering, the final and complete obliteration of the shadows of the past, the homing sun, peeping from over the distant house, bestowed its last caress upon Adele Randall, transforming her somber dress into one of gayety and splendor. True to M. Veaudry's prophecy, it appeared as if her long affected mourning was to be at length discarded; but, contrary to that gentleman's long cherished hopes, his was not the personality to induce the metamor-

CHAPTER IX.

VEN a more obtuse and inexperienced man than Eugene Kirby would not have failed to interpret Adele's words and

knew that he was dealing with no coquette, who sought to pander to vanity or who considered all men the playthings of an idle hour. It was not so much Adele's words as her manuer. which betrayed a frank liking and interest, which, despite his modest arguments to the contrary, could no longer be attributed to an impersonal regard for his safety and welfare. He saw that, unknown to herself, she was rapidly passing through the various stages of liking and interest, heading straight for that inevitable climax which is dignified by the term love. In view of the fact that he had already arrived there and had made every effort to assist her toward the same goal, the present misgivings and self censure which now assailed him were decidedly out of place.

True to his character, he had acted first and considered last. He had put forth every effort to please, to awaken her heart, and now that there were signs that it was answering he was dismayed. In the flush of his new and welcome experience he had forgotten his calling, his reputation-forgotten that he was a common gambler, with no claim upon such society as he was now enjoying-forgotten everything but that, by some miraculous fortune, he had been transplanted to the land of his dreams, had met its central figure and had promptly plunged head over heels in love.

Kirby's thorough if tardy self censure, however, was hardly justified, for he had made no conscious efforts to enlist Adele's regard, and their mutual attraction had been as instantaneous and spontaneous as it was natural and to be expected. But the knowledge of her identity had awakened him to a lively sense of his true position, and, although he was far from being the scoundrel which Moreau had pictured and Adele believed him, his regard for her clearly showed him that by remaining he was jeopardizing her future peace and happiness. He must save her from hepself and from him and, no matter how difficult it would prove, kill her dawning inter-est, which naturally was based on the supposition that he was a gentleman privileged to associate with one of her standing. Filled with this resolution, he now turned and said:

"Miss Randall, you've been kinder to me than any woman ever was. You saved my life this morning. But my friend is right. I'd better go. Already you've helped me more than you ought."

Instantly the angelic, wrapt expression was sponged from her face, and. astonished, almost angry, she turned upon him.

"Why? What right have you to say that?" she demanded. "Do you think I don't want to?"

"No," he admitted. "But-but I can't stay." "Do you want me to believe that you're afraid?"

"Yes, I'm afraid." "Afraid because we expect the real Colonel Moreau tonight or tomorrow? I'm not afraid of his coming, and you can't make me believe that you are. I don't believe you were ever afraid of a man in your life." She stood very straight and looked into his eyes, an incredulous, challenging smile on her

"No. I was never afraid of a man," he admitted quietly. "But I am afraid

"Of me?" she whispered interpreting the pause.

"Yes," he said simply. Her eyes battled to meet his own, but every effort proved futile, and at length, coloring vividly, she sought the garden seat, half turning her back, while he pre-empted the arm, toying restlessly with the white camellia he still carried.

"I gather from the stories you read the General," he continued, bending ically. "that the bad prince always keeps following the beautiful princess. "And why not? Do we need any and of course she always finds him one's word upon a notorious adven- out. Now, it looks to me like a weakword upon a creature who preyed upon my opinion, he's a fool to take the

Her answer came tremulously, but

withal brave and to the point. "I suppose I could find a story in which she would want him to take the chance. Now-now, are you going to stay?" turning and looking up, half

daringly, into his eyes. "I can't," he said doggedly. "And the sooner I go the better. Don't let anything ever make you sorry that you helped me. Goodby." And, throwing the camellia on the bench, he resolutely offered his hand.

But she ignored the hand and picked

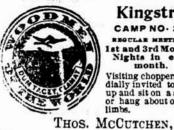
up the discarded flower. "Not yet, not yet," she whispered. There is Ann calling me, and I must dress for dinner. But I shall expect to see you again before you leave. You will wait here? You may tell me goodby then-if you wish to."

He bowed, seating himself dejectedly on the garden seat, while she flew into the house.

The sun had set, and twilight was fast approaching, the shadows of the trees blending in one solid gray impalpable mass. It seemed as if the disappearance of the sun and Adele had been coincident, productive of the same effect. Without warning the day's work seemed to be clamoring for toll, demanding more than Kirby owned. He felt weary, spent, utterly forsaken and alone, the bleak and barren future stretching interminably before him. Hostage of his bitter humor, he was oblivious to the fact that the old negro, Croup, watching his opportunity, had stolen from the house and was now regarding him fixedly, and he started when at length the other timidly ventured to address him.

"Marse, yo' scuse me, sah. Could (Continued on Page S.)

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