Contents

Preface to the First Edition ix

Preface to the Second Edition xiii

1 The Phenomenon of Gambling 1
   1.1 A selective history .......................... 1
   1.2 The gambler in fact and fiction ............... 5

2 Finite Probabilities and Great Expectations 13
   2.1 The probability concept and its origins .......... 13
   2.2 Dice, cards, and probabilities ................ 15
   2.3 Roulette, probability and odds .................. 17
   2.4 Compound probabilities: The rules of the game .... 20
   2.5 Mathematical expectation and its application .... 22
   2.6 Exercises ........................................ 26

3 Backgammon and Other Dice Diversions 29
   3.1 Backgammon oversimplified .................... 29
   3.2 Rolling spots and hitting blots ............... 32
   3.3 Entering and bearing off ...................... 34
   3.4 The doubling cube ................................ 36
   3.5 Craps .............................................. 40
   3.6 Chuck-a-Luck ..................................... 45
   3.7 Exercises ........................................ 47

4 Permutations, Combinations, and Applications 51
   4.1 Careful counting: Is order important? ............ 51
   4.2 Factorials and other notation .................... 53