

O. Henry Stories

XI.—A Technical Error.

By O. HENRY

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NEVER cared especially for feuds, believing them to be even more overrated products of our country than grapefruit, scrapple or honeymoons. Nevertheless, if I may be allowed, I will tell you of an Indian Territory feud of which I was present agent, camp follower and accessory during the fact.

I was on a visit to Sam Durkee's ranch, where I had a great time falling off unmanicured ponies and waving my bare hand at the lower jaws of wolves about two miles away. Sam was a hardened person of about twenty-five, with a reputation for going home in the dark with perfect equanimity, though often with reluctance.

Over in the Creek nation was a family bearing the name of Tatum. I was told that the Durkees and Tatums had been feuding for years. Several of each family had bitten the grass, and it was expected that more Nebuchadnezzars would follow. A younger generation of each family was growing up, and the grass was keeping pace with them. But I gathered that they had fought fairly; that they had not lain in cornfields and aimed at the division of their enemies' suspenders in the back—parly, perhaps, because there were no cornfields, and nobody wore more than one suspender. Nor had any woman or child of either house ever been harmed.

Sam Durkee had a girl. Her name was Ella Baynes. They appeared to be devoted to each other and to have perfect confidence in each other, as all couples do who are and have or aren't and haven't. She was tolerably pretty, with a heavy mass of brown hair that helped her along. He introduced me to her, which seemed not to lessen her preference for him, so I reasoned that they were surely soul mates.

Miss Baynes lived in Kingsfisher, twenty miles from the ranch. Sam lived on a gallop between the two places.

One day there came to Kingsfisher a courageous young man, rather small, with smooth face and regular features. He made many inquiries about the business of the town and especially of the inhabitants cognitively. He said he was from Muscogee, and he looked it, with his yellow shoes and crocheted four-in-hand. I met him once when I rode to for the mail. He said his name was Beverly Travers, which seemed rather improbable.

One day when I was messenger for half a gross of cigarette papers I had a couple of wagon loads I saw the alleged Beverly Travers in a yellow wheeled putty with Ella Baynes, driving about town as ostentatiously as the black, waxy mud would permit. I knew that this information would bring no balm of Gilead to Sam's soul, so I refrained from including it in the news of the city that I retailed on my return. But on the next afternoon an elongated ex-cowboy of the name of Simmons, an old time pal of Sam's, who kept a feed store in Kingsfisher, rode out to the ranch and rolled and buried many cigarettes before he would talk. When he did make oration his words were these:

"Sam, say, there's been a description of a galoot misanthrope himself Bevel Edged Travels impairing the atmospheric air of Kingsfisher for the past two weeks. You know who he was? He was not otherwise than Ben Tatum, from the Creek Nation, son of old Gopher Tatum that your Uncle Newt shot last February. You know what he done this morning? He killed your brother Lester—shot him in the cot-house yard."

I wondered if Sam had heard. He pulled a twig from a mesquite bush, chewed it a moment and said:

"He did, did he? He killed Lester?"

"The same," said Simmons. "And he did more. He run away with your girl, the same as to say Miss Ella Baynes. I thought you might like to know, so I rode out to impart the information."

"I am much obliged, Jim," said Sam, taking the chewed twig from his mouth. "Yes, I'm glad you rode out. Yes, I'm right glad."

"Well, I'll be ridin' back, I reckon. That boy I left in the feed store don't know hay from oats. He shot Lester in the back."

"Shot him in the back?"

"Yes, while he was hitchin' his boss."

"And you say?"

"Yes, Sam. Everybody seen 'em drive away together in a buckboard, with a big bundle, like clothes, tied up in the back of it. He was drivin' the team he brought over with him from Muscogee. They'll be hard to overtake right away."

"And which?"

"I was goun' on to tell you. They left on the Guthrie road. But there's no tellin' which forks they'll take—you know that."

"All right, Jim. Much obliged."

"You're welcome, Sam."

Simmons rolled a cigarette and stabbed his pony with both heels. Twenty yards away he reined up and called back:

"You don't want no assistance, a you might say?"

"Not any, thanks."

"I didn't think you were as well as long!"

Sam took out and opened a bone handled pocketknife and scraped a dried piece of mud from his left boot. I thought at first he was going to swear a vendetta on the blade of it or recite "The Gypsy's Curse." The few feuds I had ever seen or read about usually opened that way. This one seemed to be presented with a new treatment. Thus offered on the stage it would have been hissed off.

"I wonder," said Sam, with a profoundly thoughtful expression, "if the cook has any cold beans left over?"

He called Wash, the negro cook, and, finding that he had some, ordered him to heat up the pot and make some strong coffee. Then we went into Sam's private room, where he slept and kept his armory, dogs and the saddles of his favorite mounts. He took three or four six-shooters out of a bookcase and began to look them over, whistling "The Cowboy's Lament" abstractedly. Afterward he ordered the two best horses on the ranch saddled and tied to the hitching post.

Now, in the feud business in all sections of the country I have observed that in one particular there is a delicate but strict etiquette belonging. You must not mention the word or refer to the subject in the presence of a feudist. It would be more reprehensible than commenting upon the mole on the chin of your rich aunt.

It yet lacked two hours to supper time, but in twenty minutes Sam and I were plunging deep into the reheat ed beans, hot coffee and cold beef.

"Nothing like a good meal before a long ride," said Sam. "Eat hearty."

I had a sudden suspicion.

"Why did you have two horses saddled?" I asked.

"One, two-one, two," said Sam. "You can count, can't you?"

His mathematics carried with it a momentary quail and a lesson. The thought had not occurred to him that



He Pumped Six Bullets into the Body That the Brown Dress Covered.

(he thought could possibly occur to him) not to ride at his side on that red road to revenge and justice. It was the higher calculus. I was booked for the trail. I began to eat more beans.

In an hour we set forth at a steady gallop eastward. Our horses were Kentucky bred, strengthened by the mesquite grass of the west.

I knew that Ben Tatum's card to play was fight—fight until he came within the safer territory of his own henchmen and supporters. He knew that the man pursuing him would follow the trail to any end where it might lead.

During the ride Sam talked of the prospect for rain, of the price of beef, and of the musical glasses. You would have thought he had never had a brother or a sweetheart or an enemy on earth. There are some subjects too big even for the words in the "Unabridged." Knowing this phase of the feud code, but not having practiced it sufficiently I overdid the thing by telling some slightly funny anecdotes. Sam laughed at exactly the right place—laughed with his mouth. When I caught sight of his mouth I wished I had been blessed with enough sense of humor to have suppressed those anecdotes.

Our first sight of them we had in Guthrie. Tired and hungry, we stumbled, unwashed, into a little yellow pine hotel and sat at a table. In the opposite corner we saw the fugitives. They were bent upon their meal, but looked around at times uneasily.

The girl was dressed in brown—one of those smooth, half shiny, silky looking affairs with lace collar and cuffs and what I believe they call an accordion plaited skirt. She wore a thick brown veil down to her nose and a broad brimmed straw hat with some kind of feathers adorning it. The man wore plain, dark clothes, and his hair was trimmed very short. He was such a man as you might see anywhere.

There they were—the murderer and the woman he had stolen. There we were—the rightful avenger, according to the code, and the supernumerary who writes these words.

"What are you waiting for, Sam?" I said in a whisper. "Let him have it now!"

Sam gave a melancholy sigh. "I don't understand, but he does," he said. "He knows, Mr. Tenderfoot, there's a tale out here among white men in the Nation that you can't shoot a man when he's with a woman. I never knew it to be broke yet. You can't do it. You've got to get him in a gang of men or by himself. That's why. He knows it too. We all know. So that's Mr. Ben Tatum! One of the 'pretty men'! I'll cut him out of the herd before they leave the hotel!"

After supper the flying pair disappeared quickly. Although Sam haunted lobby and stairway and halls half the night, in some mysterious way the fugitives eluded him, and in the morning the veiled lady in the brown dress with the dapper young man with the close cropped hair, and the buckboard with the prancing sags were gone.

It is a monotonous story, that of the ride, so it shall be curtailed. Once again we overtook them on a road. We were about fifty yards behind. They turned in the buckboard and looked at us, then drove on without whipping their horses. Their safety no longer lay in speed. Ben Tatum knew, if he knew that the only rock of safety left to him was the code.

So you may perceive that woman, on occasions, may postpone instead of precipitating conflict between man and man. But not willingly or consciously. She is oblivious of codes.

Five miles farther we came upon the future great western city of Chandler. The horses of pursuers and pursued were starved and weary. There was one hotel that offered danger to man and entertainment to beast; so the four of us met again in the dining room at the ringing of a bell so resonant and large that it had cracked the welkin long ago. The dining room was not as large as the one at Guthrie.

Just as we were eating apple pie—how Ben Davies and tragedy impinge upon each other—I noticed Sam looking with keen interest at our quarry where they were seated at a table across the room. The girl still wore the brown dress with lace collar and cuffs and the veil drawn down to her nose. The man bent over his plate, with his close cropped head held low.

"There's a code," I heard Sam say, either to me or to himself, "that won't let you shoot a man in the company of a woman; but, by thunder, there ain't one to keep you from killing a woman in the company of a man!"

And quicker than my mind could follow his argument he whipped an automatic from under his left arm and pumped six bullets into the body that the brown dress covered—the brown dress with the lace collar and cuffs and the accordion plaited skirt.

The young person in the dark sack suit, from whose head and from whose life a woman's glory had been clipped, laid her head on her arms stretched upon the table, while people came running to raise Ben Tatum from the floor in his feminine masquerade that had given Sam the opportunity to set aside, technically, the obligations of the code.

OREGON NEWS NOTES OF GENERAL INTEREST

Important Occurrences of Past Week Briefly Compiled for Our Readers.

A fresh outbreak of rabies in eastern Oregon stock districts is feared. A new lodge of Knights of Pythias was instituted at Halfway, in Baker county.

John Day is to have a new, modern postoffice building in the very near future.

A petition for the recall of Councilman Fred Myers, of Florence, has been filed.

Grangers and allied farmers' clubs will hold an all day picnic at Central Point July 22.

A fine one-story apartment house is contemplated for Pendleton by P. D. Tull, of Spokane.

Steps are being taken to make the Roundup feature a permanent annual event at Ashland.

Alfalfa seven feet high grown without irrigation is a product of Wasco county this year.

An aviation section of the Oregon naval militia has been formed, with L. T. Barin commanding.

Umatilla county probably will be represented this year with an exhibit at the Oregon state fair.

The fourth annual Epworth League Institute of Oregon opened on the university campus Monday.

More than one quart of liquor for every man, woman and child in The Dalles was shipped in during June.

One hundred and fifty Presbyterian ministers and laymen attended the session of the Synod of Oregon in Eugene.

A new schedule that will cut 40 minutes from the running time of the Eugene-Marshfield train is being prepared.

Albany's postoffice receipts for the past quarter show a gain of 13 per cent over those of the same quarter a year ago.

The state public service commission spent last Saturday at Dayton and vicinity to look up alleged hazardous conditions.

It is reliably reported that the West

The Southern Pacific railroad notified the state public service commission that it would shortly begin the work of replacing 100 pound rails on the Corvallis & Eastern line.

Sunday closing, the sale of alcohol and the sending of poisons through the mails are among the subjects discussed by the druggists at their 27th annual convention at Seaside.

Wasco county farmers have determined to cease paying out their good money for grain sacks and many of them are erecting granaries on their ranches to handle grain in bulk.

H. H. Winslow, a veteran of the Civil War, serving in Company F, 89th Indiana, and for three years mayor of Sheridan, and his wife celebrated their golden wedding anniversary Monday.

The Eugene chamber of commerce special to the Coos Bay railroad jubilee will carry 1000 Lane county residents to the southern terminus of the Willamette Pacific railroad August 24.

While the Oregon naval militia is taking its annual cruise in Alaskan waters, the eight companies of Coast Artillery will be at Fort Stevens, where they will be in annual exercise until July 29.

"I never saw a finer fish hatchery than the Oregon state hatchery at Bonneville," declared Edwin F. Sweet, assistant secretary of the department of commerce, on his arrival in Portland from Bonneville.

Ministers of Oregon, representing all the leading denominations, will gather at Eugene Monday, July 24, for the four days' sessions of the fourth annual Oregon Interdenominational Conference of Ministers.

Seven subordinate I. O. O. F. lodges of Union county and as many Rebekah lodges sent large representations to La Grande, when the first annual convention of the Union County Oddfellows' association was held.

Captain George A. White denied the story printed by a Portland evening newspaper to the effect that he had been responsible for the proposed relief of Colonel McLaughlin from command of the third regiment.

Five hundred poor children of Portland will enjoy a holiday at the state fair grounds at Salem Thursday, July 27. Arrangements for use of the grounds have been made by the Associated Charities of Portland.

By vote of 1069 for to 336 against, the people of Medford voted acceptance of the Bullis contract for construction of the Blue Ledge railroad, \$300,000 having been voted three weeks ago for that purpose.

Whether the city of Roseburg has a legal right to collect a license for the operation of an automobile carrying the United States mail is a question that is to be submitted to the federal authorities for determination.

City Attorney Fee of Pendleton has served upon the managements of the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph and the Pacific Power & Light companies formal request to remove poles and overhead wires from Main street.

Mrs. Cora M. Davis, of Union, supreme chief of the Pythian Sisters, has issued a program for the national convention of the supreme temple of that order to be held in Portland August 1 to 10, which calls for the beginning of social events on Monday, July 31.

The Portland chamber of commerce is launching a strong campaign to secure the next annual convention of the National Educational association for Portland. A straw vote, taken at the convention in New York, gave Portland second choice as the meeting place.

In dismissing the case against the proprietor of a rooming-house who was held on a charge of bootlegging, Circuit Judge McGill of Portland declared that it is wrong for the state through one of its agents to entrap any man into the commission of a crime.

The Equal Rights to Oregon Industry committee filed with the secretary of state its argument in favor of its proposed constitutional amendment, permitting the manufacture of beer and its sale within the state under the restrictions and regulations now in force.

The announcement that Richard Carrick Babbitt, a Polk county boy and a junior at the Oregon agricultural college, entered West Point as a cadet on July 10 has been made. He was appointed by Congressman W. C. Hawley and passed the examinations with an unusually good record.

Thirty-three of about 50 enlisted members in the machine gun company of the Third Oregon, now at Palm Beach, Cal., on the Mexican border, have written to Portland newspapers to refute any impression that might exist that they are, so to speak, tied to their mothers' apron strings.

After a period of considerable turmoil and agitation in and out of the ranks of the Oregon national guard over the proposed removal of Colonel Clenard McLaughlin as commanding officer of the Third Oregon regiment at the border, the war department has rescinded its order assigning McLaughlin to the command of a company in the Thirtieth infantry, United States army, and will leave him with the Oregon troops.

Remove Face Blemishes

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Too Old to Be Fooled.

A man entered a grocery store and ordered some eggs. "That man always buys fresh eggs," whispered a small egg, peeping out from the depths of the basket. "Hub," scoffed the big egg on top. "Yuh can't tell me that. I wasn't laid yesterday."—Judge.

Horse Happy at Graduation.

Happy horse at Hackettstown, N. J., because owner has been graduated after driving animal nine miles each way to school every day for four years, aggregate distance of 14,000 miles.

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At The Churches

Arleta Baptist Church

9:45 a. m. Bible School.
11 a. m. Preaching service.
8:00 p. m. Evening services.
7:00 p. m. B. Y. P. U. meeting.
8:00 Thursday Prayer meeting.
Everybody welcome to any and all of these services.
W. T. S. Spriggs, pastor.

Millard Avenue Presbyterian Church

10 a. m. Sabbath School.
11 a. m. Morning worship.
7 p. m. Y. P. S. C. E.
7:45 p. m. Evening worship.
7:30 p. m. Thursday, midweek service.
8 p. m. Thursday, choir practice.
Rev. Wm. H. Amos, Pastor.

St. Peter's Catholic Church

Sundays:
8 a. m. Low Mass.
10:30 a. m. High Mass.
8:30 a. m. Sunday School.
12 M. Choir rehearsal.
Week days: Mass at 8 a. m.

Seventh Day Adventist Church

10 a. m. Sabbath School.
11 a. m. Saturday preaching.
7:30 p. m. Wednesday, Prayer meeting.
7:45 p. m. Sunday preaching.

Kern Park Christain Church

Corner 69th St. and 46th Ave. S. E.
10 a. m. Bible School.
11 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. preaching service.
6:30 p. m. Christain Endeavor.
7:30 p. m. Thursday, mid-week prayer meeting.
A cordial welcome to all.
Rev. G. K. Berry, Pastor.

St. Pauls Episcopal Church

One block south of Woodmere station.
Holy Communion the first Sunday of each month at 8 p. m. No other services that day.
Every other Sunday the regular services will be as usual.
Evening Prayer and sermon at 4 p. m. B. Sunday School meets at 3 p. m. B. Boatwright, Supt. L. Maffett, Sec.
Rev. O. W. Taylor Rector.

Lents Evangelical Church

Sermon by the Pastor, 11 a. m. and 7:15 p. m.
Sunday School 9:45 a. m., Albert Fankhauser, Superintendent.
Y. P. A. 8:45 p. m. Paul Bradford, President.
Prayer meeting Thursday 8 p. m.
A cordial welcome to all.
T. R. Hornschuch, Pastor.

Lents Friend's Church

9:45 a. m. Bible School, Mrs. Maud Keach, Superintendent.
11:00 a. m. Preaching services.
6:25 p. m. Christian Endeavor.
7:30 p. m. Preaching Services.
8:00 p. m. Thursday, mid-week prayer meeting.
A cordial welcome to all these services.
John Riley, Pastor.

Lents Baptist Church

Lord's Day, Bible School 9:45 a. m. Morning worship, 11 a. m. Elmo Heights Sunday School, 2:30 p. m. B. Y. P. U., 6:30 p. m. Evening worship, 7:30 p. m. A cordial welcome to these services.
J. M. Nelson, Pastor.

Fifth Church of Christ

Fifth Church of Christ, Scientist of Portland, Ore. Myrtle Park Hall, Myrtle Park.
Services Sunday 11 a. m. Sunday School 9:30 and 11 a. m. Wednesday evening testimonial meeting 8 p. m.

Lents M. E. Church

Sunday School 9:45 a. m. Preaching 11:00 a. m. Services at Bennett Chapel at 3 p. m. Epworth League 6:30 p. m. Preaching 7:30 p. m. Prayer meeting Thursday evening at 7:30.
W. R. F. Browne, pastor. Residence 5708 83rd St.

Laurelwood M. E. Church

9:45 a. m. Sunday school. 11:00 a. m. preaching. 12:30 a. m. class meeting. 6:30 p. m. Epworth League. 7:30 p. m. preaching. The pastor is assisted by a chorus choir and the Amphion Male Quartette. 8:00 p. m. Thursday evening, prayer service.
Dr. C. R. Carlos, pastor.

German Evangelical Reformed Church

Corner Woodstock Ave., and 87th St. Rev. W. G. Lienkaemper, pastor. Sunday School 10 a. m. Morning Worship, 11 a. m. Y. P. S. at 7:30 p. m. German School and Catechetical Class Saturday 10 a. m.

Third United Brethren Church

10 a. m. Sunday School. 11 a. m. Preaching. 3 p. m. Junior Christian Endeavor. 6:30 p. m. Senior Christian Endeavor. 7:30 p. m. Preaching.

Brentwood M. E. Church

10 a. m. Sunday School. 11 a. m. Preaching service.
Rev. W. L. Wilson, Pastor.

LODGE DIRECTORY

Magnolia Camp No. 4025, Royal Neighbors, meets regular Second and Fourth Wednesdays of each month at I. O. O. F. Hall. Second Wednesdays social meeting. Neighbors bring your families and friends. Fourth Wednesday, business. All Neighbors requested to come. By order of the Camp.