O. HENRY AND AL. JENNINGS

(Continued from last week)

CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE

As soon as New York became aware of O .Henry's lucky strike, was ready with its meed of homage. An eager, rushing multitude sought him out. Doors were flung wide. The man who had but a few years before been separated from his fellows could now stand among the proudest, commanding, as he would, their smiles and their tears. He preferred solitude. Not because he disdained company—not that he feared exposure, but because he despised deceit and hypocricy. And these, he felt, were the inevitable attendants of men and women in their social intercourse.

"Al, I despise these literatti," on a time he voiced the sentiment. "They remind me of big balloons. If one were to puncture their pose, there would be an astonished gasp as when one sticks a pin in the stretched rubber. And then they would be no more—not even a wrinkled trace of them." They could sue him with invitations. He had no time to waste. He was not vain, and never did he consciously try to impress any one. He was not of that righteous type that takes itself and its beliefs with ponderous seriousness, insisting that the world hear them out and then applaud.

Bill Porter was too busy watching others to take much heed about his own reflection. Because he was eminently self-sufficient, he would not allow circumstances to set his friendships for him.

But with the few who were the elect to him; who knew him and understood him he was the droll and beloved vagabond. Reticence would drop from him. He was in his element—the troubadour of old, the sparkle of his gracious wit bubbling through every breath of the heavier discourse.

Jennings Meets "Chosen Few."

"I have a treat for you, colonel. Tonight you shall meet the Chosen Few."

He would tell me no more, seeming to take a boyish delight in my irritable suspense. The Chosen Few happened to be Richard Duffy, Gilman Hall and Bannister Merwin. We had dinner together at the Hoffman House.

It was a treat—for that night I saw O. Henry as he might have been if the buoyant happiness that seemed to be his native disposition had not been deepened and saddened by the distressing humiliation of his prison years.

Porter handed me the menu. He was a bit finicky about his eating. "Gentlemen," he said to the distinguished editors, "the colonel will pick out a surprise for us." I think Porter considered me somewhat brazen because I was not awed by this presence of the elite.

"I could order bacon broiled on the hickory coals, terrapin, sour dough biscuit and coffee strong enough to float the bullets—how would you like it, Bill?"

"Don't endanger my future in my chosen profession by making me hit the tracks for the West."

Duffy and Hall looked at Porter as though a sudden vision of his portly figure galloped before them on horseback and swinging a lariat. Porter caught the question in their eyes. He was in a tantalizing mood.

"You wouldn't mind edifying the company with a discourse on the ethics of train robbing, would you, colonel?" The three guests sat up, tense with interest. It was just the setting I loved. It gave me a big bump of joy to throw a shock into these New Yorkers.

Outlaw Yarns Regale Guests

Yarn after yarn I reeled off for their absorption. I told them all the funny incidents connected with the stick-up of the trains in the Indian Territory.

I made them see the outlaw, not as a ruthless brute, but as a human being possessed of a somewhat different bias or viewpoint from their own. Porter sat back, expansive and sedate, but his large gray eyes lighted with amusement.

"Colonel, I stood in your shadow tonight," he said to me as we were parting at the Caledonia.

"What do you mean, Bill?"

"My friends to whom I introduced you ignored me. I was rather some pumpkins with Hall and Duffy until you came, and tonight I was forgotten by them. Would you mind the next time we are together telling them I held the horses for you?"

"Honest, Bill, do you mean it?"

"Yes, I think it would add to my prestige."

A few days later we were at Moquin's. I was stringing out a lurid story. I stopped in the middle and turned to Porter, as though my memory had slipped and I had overlooked an important detail. "Bill, you remember," I said, "that was the night you held the horses." Duffy dropped his fork, sending out a roar of laughter. He reached over and grabbed Porter's hand. "By Jove, I always suspected you, Bill Porter."

Stories Sold Through Yarns.

"I want to thank you, colonel, for those kind words. You have done me a great service. I sold two stories this morning on the strength of my presumed association with you," Porter said a day later. "Those fellows think now that I really belonged to your gang. I have become a personage."

Not for worlds, though, would Porter have openly acknowledged to these men that he had been a prisoner in the Ohio penitentiary. Bob Davis, I am certain, knew it. He practically admitted it to me. Duffy and Hall felt the mystery surrounding the man.

"Colonel, every time I step into a public cafe I have the horrible fear that some ex-con will come up and say to me 'Hello, Bill; when did you get out of the O. P.?'"

No one ever did this. It would have been an insufferable shock to Porter's pride, especially when his success was new to him. After all, the jovial warmth of that dinner at Mouquin's after all the banter and gayety, the weight of oppressive sadness came down upon him.

The memory of the past; the troubled fear of the future—the two together seemed ever to press like gigantic forces against the bonny happiness of the present for Bill Porter.

I was recklessly gay. I had taken plenty of the "wine that boils when it is cold." In the exuberance I asked all the gentlemen present to be my escort across the river. Porter kicked me under the table, turning on me a straight, meaningful look.

"Colonel, I am the only one that has nothing to do except yourself. These gentlemen are editors. I shall be glad to act as your escort and keep you from walking off the boat. The sea never gives up its dead."

Would Enjoy Jump in River.

"I don't want those men to be with us in our last moments," he said when we were crossing the Hudson.

"Good God, Bill you aren't going to jump over and pull me with you?"

"No. But I think I would rather enjoy it."

He had not been shamming gayety at the dinner. When a full tide, it had swept over him. But there was always an undertow of shadows and whenever he was alone it carried him out—often to a bitter depth of gloomy depression.

(Continued next week)

MY HEART AND MY HUSBAND

Adele Garrison's New Phase Of REVELATIONS OF A WIFE

CHAPTER 64

WHAT MRS. DURKEE SAID TO RITA BROWN.

To all outward appearance the big touring car which Alfred Durkee had summoned from a neighboring garage held the merriest of care-free parties as we were rushed over the smooth Long Island roads on our way to "The Sand Pile."

But I—who had gleaned from both observation and the confidences of others many facts indicating the true condition of affairs—knew that the laughing faces masked anything but merriment in most of our number.

Edith Fairfax had remained upon the Durkee veranda with my father and Dicky's mother, saying frankly that she had been so [illegible] where there was no chance for quiet and beauty that she would not exchange the moonlight and apple blossoms for the most celebrated entertainment in the world. There was a quiet determination in her voice that told me what long canteen service—often under fire—on the French battlefront had done to develop the timid, shrinking southern art student, whom I had seen roused out of her apparently colorless personality but twice, both times when Dicky was in question.

In Gay Spirits.

That her love for my husband was still flaming within her soul I was sure, although, despite my knowledge that they had for a time been stationed near each other in France, I hugged to my heart the belief that Dicky held for her only a strong brotherly liking.

The innate justice of my nature compelled me to respect and sympathy for Edith Fairfax, even though the primitive jealousy which in greater or less degree is hidden in the nature of every woman kept me from the sincere liking I am sure I would have otherwise entertained for the girl.

The contrast between her and her sister was a marked one, although I knew that before Edith's expedition to France the girls had been much alike. But Leila's development was all in the future. She was still essentially immature, inexperienced, and as she sat close beside be in the tonneau of the machine, almost huddled against me, in fact, I had a sudden feeling that she was instinctively shinking from the proximity of Rita Brown on the other side of her, and that primitive jealousy was awakening the possibilities of her soul.

Rita Brown was in the wildest of spirits. Her laughter, undeniably musical, but loud, bubbled forth at the slightest provocation. She kept a running fire of raillery with Dicky and Alfred Durkee, who sat facing us in the tonneau, and once challeneged Alfred's mother, who had insisted with the pretty fussiness which always gains her point, upon sitting in the front seat with the driver.

"Oh, Mother Durkee!"

"Oh, Mother Durkee!" Rita called audaciously, and then, as my little neighbor vouchsafed no answer, she called again. "Mother Durkee, can't you hear me, or are you so conceited at sitting in the front seat that you don't want to?"

Little Mrs. Durkee gave a low laugh, one in which I, who knew her so well, recognized the dainty, malicious note of which she is capable on occasion.

"I never answer when I'm called 'outen my name'," she said merrily. "If you'd said 'stepmother' now it would have been all right. I'm old enough to be mother to young things like Edith and Leila, but not to Madge or you. I wasn't married in my cradle, you know."

I was cattish enough to feel like clapping my hands. With unerring intuition little Mrs. Durkee had found the weak place in Rita Brown's armor. Uncommonly youthful looking, she had always pretended to be of the same age as the Fairfax girls. It was a pretense which was successful with men, but I had known when I first met her, as indeed would any woman, that the girl's thirtieth birthday was either a thing of the past, the present or the immediate future.

Leila Fairfax, next me, gave a quick, indrawn breath; Dicky, opposite me, unable to chuckle as I knew he must be longing to do, kicked my shoe lightly. Alfred Durkee's face in the moonlight showed a tightening of the lips, a drawing of the eyebrows, but he said nothing, although I was sure that his mother's little speech had both displeased and disturbed him.

But Rita Brown, although I was certain her slender fingers were momentarily twitching with the impulse to strangle some one—any one—gave no slightest indication of discomposure. Her laugh rang out as lightly as ever.

"You must be like my mother," she said merrily. "She makes every daughter and daughter-in-law call her sister."

We drew up to the entrance of "The Sand Pile" as she spoke, so there was no opportunity for comment or retort upon Mrs. Durkee's part if she had wished it. But I wondered if there had been a challenge in Rita Brown's answer.

(To be continued)

Kozer, Knighton and Steiner Leave for East

Sam A. Kozer, secretary of state; Dr. R. E. Lee Steiner, superintendent of the state hospital for the insane, and W. C. Knighton, architect, who will build the state training school for boys, for which money was appropriated by the last legislature, left last night on a tour of investigation of training schools for ideas to be used in the construction of the Oregon school.

They were authorized to make the trip by the state board of control. Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Colorado, California and other states will be visited. The Oregon school will cost about $260,000.

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