

A CONSCIENCE FUND

How an Apparition Followed a Victim Into the Desert and "Delivered the Goods."

By LYLE L. COLE.

After walking 350 miles without finding a town which pleased him, Oakley left the railroad track and turned into the tawny desert.

He walked ten or a dozen miles farther, straight across the shimmering sand, lashed by the thousand whips of the sun, and then stopped to think the matter over.

Looking backward over the path he had followed, he was pleased to see that even the faint, bluish, perpendicular lines that had marked the location of the telegraph poles were no longer visible. There was nothing in sight to remind him of human beings.

The sun was still high and the heat which had made the morning almost unendurable was yet oppressive.

After satisfying himself that he was, indeed, beyond the probable reach of human eyes, Oakley stood for a few minutes, meditating.

"I don't really believe that they have any idea where I am, and I doubt if they are still trying to find me," he said. "But I can't stay in a town two days without getting nervous. Every policeman I see appears to have difficulty in keeping his hands off from me, and I just have to dig. I feel safer out in the open, where there isn't anything but animals—where everything skulks, the same as me."

He sat down in a partially shaded niche in one of the rain-gashed buttes, and fanned himself with his frayed hat.

"Somebody says a guilty conscience doeth us up like a patent medicine," he mused. "Wonder why consciences aren't more appropriately distributed. Some men, like me, who have outgrown the need of one, have enough to bother four men, and some who need one badly are turned loose without any."

"One would suppose that when a fellow gets to the point where he can kill another man his conscience would give him little trouble."

"What was that?"

He sprang up suddenly. "Oh, I see. Go it, you long-eared collection of legs," he said, with relief, as a jack-rabbit hastened toward a line of bushes across the valley.

Oakley followed slowly along the path taken by the rabbit. He knew the bushes were greasewoods, and thought there must be a stream near. Upon approaching nearer he thought he saw a man standing motionless near a bush. Therefore he turned quickly and slunk back along the ragged edge of a dry run.

There was something suspicious, he told himself, in the fact that a man was doing nothing, or anything, in such a wilderness, and he could not afford to take any chances. He crept to the top of the butte and cautiously took a position where he could watch the row of greasewoods.

Lying flat on his stomach under the hot sun was trying work. He thought of something he had learned at school—something about earning bread by the sweat of his brow.

"Seems to me I've paid for about five good leaves already," he remarked, after half an hour had passed. "But where are they? I never did believe half of those copy-book tales."

He shifted to one side, and continued his reverie.

"Now, I can't see why that fellow wants to stand there in the hot sun like an imitation of Lot's wife. 'Tain't natural, nor even sensible. Oh! You're coming over here, are you? All right, mister. My latch-string's hanging out, and there's only one of you, so receiving callers is not going to be at all tedious."

Oakley laid an old revolver in a depression in the sand.

"You aren't much like the gun the horse thief stole from me," he said, addressing it meditatively. "It ain't at all likely you'd shoot if I was to hitch wild horses to your trigger, but as far as looks go you're a sight more impressive than none."

Several times the man straggling across the gleaming sand stopped and shaded his eyes with his hand, scanning the horizon in all directions, but always completing the search with a glance at the butte where Oakley lay sweltering.

Oakley watched him curiously. There was something familiar about him. Was it his manner of walking? Oakley could not determine. Suddenly the man vanished from sight.

Oakley rubbed his eyes and stared out across the vibrating heat waves. No one was in sight. Absolutely no living thing could be seen anywhere. And yet Oakley could have sworn that a moment before a man was coming slowly toward him. He stood up and peered eagerly into the desert. The look of wonder on his face changed quickly to one of alarm. Ah! Now he had it. It had suddenly dawned upon him that the one he imagined he had seen was French. No one else walked like French.

And if that was French there was but one conclusion, Oakley said to himself. He was going insane. French he knew to be dead, for he had killed him. Therefore, French could not be walking over the desert. Oakley knew now that he was beginning to see visions, to conjure up venal shapes, and to grope in mental darkness.

Inanity—horrid, gibbering lunacy—had tracked him, self-driven from the companionship of men, far out into the

wilderness. It had left the railroad track and the telegraph poles, even as he had done, and followed him.

It would always follow him. Oakley realized it all at once. There was no escape. No desolate region far from the haunts of men was secure from this insidious, insatiable Nemesis. No spot, crowded to the utmost by other men, was inaccessible to this clammy monster of the brain. Yet Oakley shuddered at the thought of separation from his kind.

Picking up his revolver, he turned to descend the butte.

There before him stood French, grinning amiably.

The revolver fell to the ground, filling its muzzle with dirt. With a wild shriek Oakley dashed away. French put out a nimble foot and brought him to the ground, where he lay, stunned.

When Oakley regained consciousness French was sitting near by, cross-legged, masticating tobacco.

Oakley sat up, and the apparition handed him a piece of the weed. Oakley took it and examined it carefully. It appeared to be genuine. Then he arose, and, walking up to the apparition, felt cautiously about the head and shoulders. The genuine "feel" was there also.

Oakley looked for a moment out over the sand toward the railroad track, shook his head doubtfully, and sat down.

"Lord, what a place!"

"Well, what's the matter with it?" asked French.

"Everything is so sort of confusing. I can't quite see clearly," replied Oakley.

French took from his pocket a roll of bills, and separating several from the roll, handed them to Oakley. "See any better now?" he queried.

Oakley thumbed them over doubtfully, his mind still in a haze. After a pause he said slowly: "Well, yes, I think the dawn is gradually illuminating my darkened vision, and yet I can't—What is this money for?"

"That's your pay for killing me," responded French glibly, "and a recompense for the anguish of mind which must have been yours when considering your awful deed. You see, Oakley, old man, when you became so angry at me, back in our little home town, and attempted to put me where I could no longer arouse your indignation, you failed utterly—didn't even touch me with your bullet. When I fell, dazed by the bombardment, you evidently thought I was dead. Any way, you fled. Living, as I did, a bachelor on the outer edge of town, no one heard the shot and no one came to investigate. I happened to be out of money."

Oakley interrupted: "As usual." "I saw a chance for a scheme," continued French. "My friend, the physician, came at an opportune time to see me, and with his assistance as the certifier of my death I passed from the knowledge of men, was duly and mournfully buried, and by unimaginable toil, together with the kindly aid of my beneficiary, succeeded in realizing upon some fraternal insurance that happened to be fully paid up."

"Then you—you aren't dead?" said Oakley meekly.

"No, but pretty near it. What with following you through the infernal country that was ever left out doors for the wolves to howl in, in order to reimburse you for being the founder of my success in life, or death, as you might say, and also considering the hard labor I endured trying to establish my identity as a dead man, I am about dead."

"Oakley," he concluded wearily, "don't you ever try to accumulate wealth by the life insurance plan. Saw wood or tend sheep, but don't try to get it by dyin' falsely."

Oakley passed his hand over his forehead. When he drew it away it was covered with cold sweat, and thinking still of the apparition out on the hot sand, he declared solemnly that he never would.

After a few minutes of silence, he said, holding out his hand awkwardly, "I don't feel so angry at you as I did, partly because I've had a lesson that ain't down in the copy-books, and partly because it is an unusual experience for a man to have his victim pay him for tryin' to kill him. Let's shake."

"Perfectly agreeable," said French amiably.

"It was a good thing for me, financially, that you once took to murderin'. Let's go back to town and spend some of our money."

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Story of Families Much Alike.

The romantic lives of the Rothschilds and the Guggenheims, the two richest families in the world, are strangely similar. In each instance the first representative of the family to start the fortune called to gather his sons. Five there were of the Rothschilds, seven of the Guggenheims. In each case the fable spun by Aesop concerning the bundle of sticks which cannot be broken if held together, but so easily destroyed each by itself, was told in the fashion of the man who told it.

Both urged loyalty to the faith of Moses and commanded their boys to obey their mother in all things and remain united in the family by intermarriage—"and you will be rich among the richest—the world will be long to you." There have been no defections from the house of Rothschild; but one from the house of Guggenheim. And large portions of the world do belong to them.

Literal.

"It must be a bitter experience to have to eat the bread of a stranger." "I should say so, with all the exposures they are making nowadays of the bakeries."

In the City of Bremen

JUST at sunset it was that our boat sailed into Bremer-Haven. The sky was tinted all the shades of pink and violet with a tiny bit of yellow at the horizon. The water was white and smooth, only here and there reflecting the colors of the sky. Everywhere overhead, in front and back of the boat sea-gulls were flying. They cut great, graceful circles in the sky with their wings tilted sidewise. Some were resting on the water, moving languidly up and down with the slight motion of the wavelets, and still others were crying and fighting for the waste food that was being thrown from the back of the ship. Their snow-white wings reflected the pale sun-set colors, writes a correspondent of the Pittsburgh Dispatch.

Slowly the boat was steered in between long, narrow points of dark green land. Silhouetted against the sky were wind-mills and tall straight trees. Nothing seemed real for we glided so slowly that we seemed to be on a phantom ship in a dream. The bustling stewards and cabin-boys broke our reverie with the exciting news that the customhouse officials were waiting to inspect our baggage that night and if anything can bring a dreamer back to earth it is a practical German customhouse officer with his formal uniform, his great mustache and his guttural withering jargon, "Cigarren oder Liqueur?"

Bremer-Haven is the home of the North German Lloyd steamer officers. These men love the sea and they live as near to it as possible, even after they have retired from active service. They spend their vacations in the Hartz mountains taking walking trips.

Sea Captain's History.

Last June there was an ex-captain on board and he had a curious history. At first he impressed one as being very old, but when he took his cap off we saw his hair was not the least bit gray. He was dressed as much like a real captain as was possible for a man to be. He always wore dark blue with a cap on his head. He was silent and melancholy except when the Titanic disaster was mentioned, and then he defended Captain Smith.



BREMEN TO BARMSTEDT ELEVATED RAILWAY

with a vim that seemed almost unwarranted. One day the deck steward told us his history.

Three years before he had been a real captain, and no prouder man ever rode the seas. He was taking a freighter through the Mediterranean when suddenly in broad daylight he ran his ship upon a sandbar, and the boat went down. No lives were lost but the cargo was very valuable and his stripes were taken from him, and he was made steerage inspector. It was easy to see why he had so championed Captain Smith and said that disasters can happen to the best of captains. But it is one of the traditions of the sea that a man who has once lost a ship must never be captain again.

Bremen is a very attractive city. Running through the center of the town is a long narrow lake, along whose banks all the fine residences of the city are situated. They are very charming villas, ornamented with many flowers and trailing vines. The lake is full of ducks, little ducks, big ducks, white ducks and black ducks. Their homes are little houses anchored in the center of the lake. They are high and dry and filled with straw for the little ducklings, and far away from the bad boys that grow even in well-regulated, military Germany.

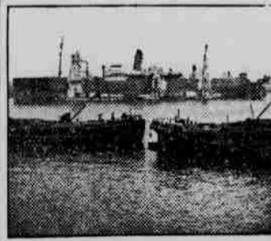
One of the most important things in Bremen is the Rolanda, a colossal figure in stone that stands in the Rathaus square, and is the symbol of civic liberty. Rolanda is as primitive as Cubist art and looks like he might have been a production of that school. He stands very straight and stiff, holding a sword in one hand and a shield in the other. Rolanda is the mascot of

the city and if anything should happen to him the people would be very much alarmed about their safety.

Nearly all the important buildings in Bremen are gathered around the Rolanda and the Rathaus square. The old Rathaus is one of the most interesting in all Germany.

The upper floor of the Rathaus is occupied by the Great Hall, which is always left open to the public. The ceiling of this old hall is very unique, for it is set with the portraits of all the emperors from Charlemagne to Sigismund. In between the portraits are hung models of famous old ships.

The lower floor or cellar of the Rathaus is occupied by a famous rathskeller, where only two kinds of drinks are served—Rhine and Moselle wine. No food can be had unless the wine is first ordered. The rathskeller is a great favorite with the men of Bremen and many have their favorite table, and here they sit and smoke



Unloading Train at Bremer-Haven.

and talk and let the outside world wag as it will.

Bismarck Most Popular Hero.

The end of the Rathaus square is occupied by the cathedral, a tall, uninteresting looking building, with two big towers. Standing at the front door is Bismarck on a horse. It is one of the nicest statues of Bismarck yet erected. In time every city in Germany will have its Bismarck statue, for he is today the most popular German hero.

Next to the cathedral is the exchange. This exchange is neither as large nor as important as the one in Hamburg, but nevertheless a vast

HAVE NOT SAME VIEWPOINT

Logic and Argument Mean One Thing to a Man and Another to a Woman.

"Logic" is the rock on which the views of man and woman split. He "knows" that she is inconsistent, she that he argues only for the joy of hearing his own wisdom. Each knows that convincing the other is a gift not granted by the high gods unto mortals. But the knowing fails to keep them from debating until debate threatens to degenerate into wrangling and feminine tears and masculine vehemence of expression bid them cease.

Each is right and both are wrong. Man refuses to be convinced, woman is incapable of being convinced. The source of the difficulty lies in the fact that logic and argument, like truth, mean one thing to him and another to her. Man enjoys argument, the pitting of wits against wits and power versus strength, even if he be worsted, but woman dislikes it instinctively, even if she prove a winner. The reason is that he is born for battle and self-assertion, she for peace, whose essence is self-denial, if not self-effacement.

To man argument is a good deal of a mental game of chess, to woman it is an earnest clash of two personalities.

Man will wage wordy warfare with man over the merits of a point of honor or those of a security, and put the best of him into the intellectual and verbal duel, and not seldom lose his temper for the moment or the hour; but when the war of words is over he thrusts the affair behind him, has no personal feeling as regards his opponent and many even acknowledge that there was foundation for opinions he withstood. But woman argues about the deeper feelings or thought in regard to such problems as politics, religion or virtue and takes the matter with terrible seriousness as an affair of life and death. Her regard for sincerity and truth, as she understands these qualities, makes the debate one to be expressed in terms of personality.

When two such standards and methods of argument as man's and woman's come together we have the spiritual analogy to the physical phenomenon of an irresistible force encountering an immovable obstacle. Too often the outcome is an everlasting smash. But the issue is inevitable. It was forecasted in the first recorded conversation between man and woman—that of Adam and Eve in Eden after eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It will continue thus to the end of days.—Spokesman Review.

Seven Varieties of Flies.

Seven different varieties of flies are found in our houses, 98 per cent of which are represented by the common housefly. Flies lay their eggs only in fermenting or decaying substances—by preference in manure. Hence every stable is a center of infection unless periodically disinfected. The fly maggot is also hatched out in latrines and asphalt refuse, such as bedding, straw, rags, paper, scraps of meat, fruit, etc., on which substances the larvae subsist after they hatch, which occurs in about twelve days after the egg has been laid. It is estimated that a single fly, laying 120 eggs at a time, will produce a progeny amounting to sextillions by the end of the season.

The numbers of bacteria upon a single fly have been proved to range all the way from 550 to 6,000,000. The average for 414 flies which were examined at the agricultural experiment station at Storrs, Conn., was 1,250,000 bacteria apiece. This represents about the number of bacteria that enter the human system when someone swallows a glass of liquid into which some fly has fallen, to be removed by a slovenly waiter without the liquid being thrown away.

Radium as Egg Producer.

Great and manifold as are the wonders of radium, it might be well to receive the following information with some reserve.

It is reported that an American farmer named Cyrus Whiffle, who has been prospecting in Paradox valley, Colorado came home recently bringing with him a small sack of radium-bearing ore, and dumped some of the pieces in the drinking fountain used by the Whiffle hens.

As a result, according to Whiffle, the water became strongly radioactive, the hens drank it, and their eggs production almost doubled. Many of the hens began laying two eggs daily.

Whiffle says that his entire family, since beginning to eat the radioactive eggs have gained steadily in strength and that all their ailments have disappeared.

Repairing Fractured Hearts.

Thirty-one patients in a Russian hospital have recovered from stab wounds of the heart!

Doctor Zildler says the patients were put under the influence of ether very soon after the injury, part of the chest wall was removed, the heart lifted from its bed and the stitches quickly introduced between pulsations. The bony chest wall over the heart was not put back in place, that organ being left covered only by skin and muscle. This was done to give the heart room to expand and to prevent adhesions from embarrassing the heart's action. Several of the patients have resumed their usual employment.

The probable reason for the success of the experiment was prompt and rapid operation.

SURPRISED MR. BALL

DESERVED SCOLDING THAT WAS INDEFINITELY POSTPONED.

Father Knew He Was Late, But He Did Not Know of Happening That Made Family So Glad to Welcome Him.

"I never had chicken pie for supper yet," sighed Mrs. Ball, "but your father took that time to be late."

Tom glanced at his watch. "And I have an engagement down town at eight o'clock. If I wasn't going anywhere he'd have been home half an hour ago."

"And it makes supper dishes so late!" murmured thirteen-year-old Marion.

The telephone bell rang and Tom took down the receiver. "Yes, this is Tom. No, he hasn't come home yet. Is that so? Well! Yes, I'll call you as soon as he comes. Good-by."

He tried to speak unconcernedly as he faced his mother and sister. "It was Angle, and she wanted to speak with father—"

"What was she telling you about?" broke in Mrs. Ball.

The boy hesitated; then he met his mother's anxious eyes steadily. "She heard that a Myrtle avenue car bumped into a Blossom street car. Nothing very serious, I imagine. Besides, you know father doesn't take that car once a year."

"Yes, he just hates the suburban line," agreed Marion quickly.

Mrs. Ball did not speak. She walked to the bay window and pushed aside the lace draperies with trembling fingers. The children came to her side, and all three peered anxiously into the twilight.

"Here he is!" cried Marion.

Tom shook his head. "Too tall for father. It's Mr. Stevenson! But who is this coming now?"

"Judge Daniels," whispered Mrs. Ball, faintly.

During the next 15 minutes several other late comers in turn roused and disappointed the hopes of the Balls. Then, quite unexpectedly, a familiar little figure came walking briskly up the avenue. Mrs. Ball sighed with relief, and bustled off to the kitchen while the children threw open the front door.

"I guess I'm pretty late," began Mr. Ball, meekly. He stopped in surprise as Tom politely helped him with his coat and Marion solicitously hung up his hat.

"Hurry up, Henry!" called Mrs. Ball, good-naturedly. "I've your favorite chicken pie for supper. It may be a little cold, but I thought it might taste good after a hard day's work."

"I tried to get that Myrtle avenue car," began Mr. Ball a second time, "but I just missed it."

Marion's cool, red lips brushed his. "Now, father, don't stop to talk," she urged; "come and eat."

And the Ball family sat down jubilantly to partake of soggy, lukewarm chicken pie.—Youth's Companion.

American Corn at a French Palace.

Apropos of the visions of the second empire evoked by the visit of the former Empress Eugenie to Fontainebleau, Madame de Hegermann-Lindencron, author of "In the Courts of Memory," relates an interesting account of her own gala visit to that palace. As the empress had expressed a wish to taste American corn,

Madame de Hegermann brought some with her and tried to explain to the palace chef how to cook it—"en robe de chambre." But when it appeared it was still in husk and silk. "I tried," she says, "to make it less objectionable by unwrapping the cobs and cutting off the corn. Then I added butter and salt, and it was passed about; first, of course, to the emperor, who liked it very much; but the empress pushed her plate aside with a grimace, saying, 'I don't like it; it smells like a baby's flannels.' The emperor, seeing the crushed look on my face, raised his glass and said, with a kind glance at me, 'Here's to the American corn!'"

One of Wisest Russian Rulers.

One hundred years ago the Emperor Alexander I of Russia returned to St. Petersburg after an absence of many months, during which time he had taken an active part in the war against Napoleon. Alexander was one of the wisest and most magnanimous rulers of his time. It was to a great extent his firmness and wisdom that led to the overthrow of Napoleon, and, after that event, his magnanimity preserved the city of Paris from the fury of the Russian soldiers, liberated 150,000 French prisoners of war confined in Russia and sought to obtain for his fallen foe the most liberal terms compatible with what he deemed the safety of Europe. One of the first acts of the emperor after his return to Russia was to grant an absolute pardon to all his subjects who had taken part against him in the late war.

Showing Good Work.

Patience—I see in Tasmania dentists are forbidden by law from any form of advertising.

Patience—But can the authorities make their patients shut their mouths?

Lingering Sweetness.

Patience—Some one has discovered that the Mexican word for kiss is tetennamiquiltitli.

Patience—That's what might be called lingering sweetness long drawn out.

Numerous Ties.

"I don't care much for Lonelyville." "Why don't you move then?" "Too many ties. Our neighbor has my card table, another my wheelbarrow and a third my lawn mower."