

The Observer

MORO, OREGON.

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Fighting a Railroad

By M. QUAD

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When the surveyors for the B. and B. railroad reached within a mile of the town of Scioville they were stopped by the owner of a farm, who threatened them with an action for trespass if they set foot on his land.

It was old Ransome who had lived on that farm since he was born and was now over sixty years old. Boy and man, he had been known as stingy and mean, and no one had ever dealt with him a second time. His wife was about like him in her disagreeable way. The two seldom or never disagreed with each other, but they disagreed with everybody else.

The town of Scioville wanted that railroad and wanted it built at once, but there was old John blocking the way and his old wife backing him up. It must cross his eighty-acre farm to reach the town. The surveyors argued and coaxed, but it was of no use.

The railroad finally guarded its surveyors and the line was run, but that was only the beginning of the fight. It collected its forces and began the grading. Old John was out there with his gun and his wife was there with a club, but the men laughed at them and carried them off the scene, and in a few weeks there was the howling and tooting that the old couple dreaded to hear. They would not sell, and the railroad waited for them to propose some sort of settlement.

There was a highway about a quarter of a mile to the south of the Ransome farm, and the new railroad crossed it at a level. The soil was so soon gouged out by the wheels of the wagons, and this left the tracks three or four inches above the surface. When old John observed this he raked up his oxen and hitched them to his wagon and went after a load of wood. When he returned with it to the crossing he stuck there. The oxen could not pull the wagon across the rails. The old man sat down to patiently wait for a train to come along. One appeared in sight in about an hour and found its progress blocked. It took all the train hands and some of the passengers to boot to get that wagon across the track. There was funing and threatening, but old John was very quiet and calm. He repeated this performance once a day for a week. Then the railroad put down planks and the scheme was defeated.

"Well, we'll have to try some other trick," said the old folks to each other. And as a result of their planning they went out at night with a big pall of soft soap and smeared the rails for a distance of thirty rods. The next train that came that way did not wheel past; it stood still and whizzed, and it took the best part of an hour and a barrel of sand to make the wheels go round again and have a grip on the rails.

Old John was arrested for this soapy trick, but they could prove nothing against him, and he was discharged from custody. After this a new attempt was made to bring about a settlement, but it was doomed to failure from the start. Then came another adventure. Old John cut the grass in his meadow, and while drawing it to the barn to store away he drove across the track at a point on his own farm and a wheel somehow came off the wagon and dumped hay and vehicle in a grand heap. There was just time to get the oxen out of the way when a locomotive of a freight train plunged into the mess. Hay and splinters flew over half the county, and the whole train was dented at a cost of many thousand dollars to the company.

There were two lawsuits begun immediately, one by the company to make the old man pay damages and one by Old John to collect the worth of a wagon and a ton of hay. The railroad folks could not show any scheme on his part and was the loser in its suit. A jury also held that an engineer who would slam bang into a load of hay in broad daylight should be held responsible, and Old John got about three times the value of the property destroyed.

By and by when the pumpkin season had come old Mr. Ransome kindly permitted a passenger train to run into a wagonload of them—that is, his oxen stopped to rest when the wagon was halfway over the track. He was heard shouting at them at the top of his voice and seen to flourish his gad in an excited manner, but he was forced to escape to save his own life. Pieces of those pumpkins were picked up miles away, and a week after the train was wrecked again, and one of the oxen was converted into fresh beef. Here was groundwork for another lawsuit, and the jury decided that any railroad that would strive to lessen the pumpkin crop ought to pay for it right smartly.

It is very probable that the old couple might have returned to the soft soap trick if they had been given more time, but fate willed it otherwise. They were coming home from a call on a neighboring farm, and it was a giddy, rainy night, and it was a crossing they saw the light of a locomotive approaching, but defiantly kept on their way and were struck and hurled into a field and both instantly killed. No one in Scioville was mean enough to say they were glad of it, but the B. and B. railroad saw its chance and moved quickly. Before it could be sued by the heirs it went into court against itself and was legally permitted to settle the claim for \$5,000.

They say that the ghosts of old Ransome and his wife haunt the farm

The Moon on the Pillow

Murder Mysteries That Never Were Solved

By GEORGE M. CAIN

Copyright by Frank A. Munsey Co.

"Young man, don't be a fool!"

The words were spoken so vehemently, so differently from those which usually came from the lips of the old man, that we all faced him in astonishment.

Twenty years before Chief Inspector Herman Williams had been known as a terror to evildoers. Quite suddenly he had resigned. His whole disposition seemed to have softened to the verge of weakness.

Save that he became a daily attendant at the chapel two doors away, he lived the life of a recluse. Just toward the last he had sufficiently opened up his solitude to admit two or three of us young writers, who hoped to hear from him the things we could turn into salable stories.

It was Harding Hunter, who had somehow introduced the old time theory of the moon's effect on the human mind. He was trying to work up a story with the hypothesis as a basis.

"Of course," he had remarked, "there is absolutely nothing to the whole business. The moon has about as much psychology to it as there is life on it. But it seems to me."

And here the ex-chief had suddenly burst forth with his exclamation of angry disgust.

"Don't ever deny the testimony of millions on any subject until you have more than the best of theories to offer against it. Don't say there are no ghosts; don't deny apparitions and visions; don't sneer at the occult."

"But, chief," interposed Mortimer Henry, "you don't mean to say you really think there is anything in this moon business?"

"I did once," the old man said, with a shudder. He was silent for an instant; then spoke again. "I guess it is safe enough for me to tell you youngsters."

A year before I quit the bureau there was a particularly brutal child murder which for a time absolutely baffled every effort to find the fiend that committed it. The child had been strangled and afterward slashed with a razor.

I was greatly worried about the failure of myself and my men in the matter. The razor was our only clue. The razor was found hanging on the fire escape outside the room in which the child had been slain.

As you know, I have never married. I lived on the top floor of an old-fashioned tenement house near the office. Things were not as strict then as now. The house had but one exit. There were no fire escapes on the windows.

My household consisted of an old negro couple that my parents had brought north before the war. Besides them, I had only two dogs, valuable collies, and the most devoted animals I have ever known. Old Auntie Dinah had a parrot, which I had given her and of which she was inordinately fond.

The neighborhood was not very desirable, nor the house. The apartment

was not light, save at the front. A V-shaped court admitted air to the two bedrooms and a little sunlight over the higher building next to us in the middle of a few summer days.

On the night of Feb. 5 I retired as usual, though I had been particularly wrought up over the mystery which so completely baffled all our efforts at solution.

I was awakened by the wild cries of the old negro. Before I could get into my bathrobe and slippers I heard her husband shouting for me at my door. I hurried out to the kitchen.

One of my collies had been strangled. Afterward, apparently, the perpetrator of the deed had used a razor to slash the body in as detailed a copy of the cutting of the murdered child as could be accomplished with a hairy animal.

As I have said, there was only one entrance to the house—at the front. This was of small consequence, anyhow, for I knew little of the inmates, any one of whom might be a criminal.

To my apartments there were a front and a rear entrance from the stair well. On these doors were heavy bolts, as well as double locks. The locks were all fastened with the keys inside in the morning, and neither of the bolts was open. This took care of the doors.

There were three front and two rear

windows. As the house was without fire escapes the only possible access to these must have been from the roof by way of a rope let down.

But at that time of year all of these windows were closed and fastened. Three windows opened on the V-shaped court.

One of these I had had cut when I got the bathroom arranged in what had been a dark clothes closet. It was too small for any human being to crawl through. Moreover, a fly screen had been tacked in the window frame itself and left there.

As for the window opening into the negroes' room, no amount of coaxing could persuade them to open it in winter.

This narrowed things down to my own window, the only one in the flat open during the night. Aside from the difficulty of getting to it from the roof above, there was the fact that no one could possibly have got through the open upper half without stepping or falling on my bed.

It seemed that no person could have got in or out of the apartment. We gave it up.

On March 6 my other collie was missing. The negroes insisted that they had not let him out. I myself recalled having seen him when I had gone to the kitchen for a drink of water just before retiring. I had overslept and was compelled to hurry to the office.

It was not until night that I learned the fate of my second dog. He had

brought the old theory of the moon's connection with lunacy to my mind. It was on the night of the 29th of December.

I had almost determined to drop the whole matter, since we had absolutely nothing on which to go ahead. But the thought of the moon and lunacy aroused my interest sufficiently to cause me to glance over an almanac.

There I quickly discovered that the moon had been full on the nights of Feb. 5, March 6, April 5, May 5, Sept. 23, Oct. 23, Nov. 27.

On four of these dates my rooms had been entered and life had been taken in a fashion to indicate the work of some madman with close knowledge of the city's murder cases.

But I had never heard that any form of lunacy was particularly connected with an absolutely full moon. Moreover, the hours of the full moon as given in the almanac varied, some of them coming in the daytime.

I had to pursue the subject farther. If it was to furnish me with any real clue. A full moon is, of course, the only moon that shines at its zenith at or very near midnight. This might make a difference. Yet it took me some moments to think how.

Then it flashed upon me. There was some spot where the only light of the moon that ever fell was at midnight, and when the moon was full.

This fitted the case entirely. I was so impressed that I could not get away from it.

If I could find such a spot—particularly if it were a spot under which some person slept—I should certainly not let that person go until after the most rigid investigation of his mind and his nocturnal habits.

But how could such a spot be found? Obviously I could not set my men upon the task of searching half a million bedrooms at the hour of midnight when the moon was full. The thing was quite as hopeless as ever. All I had gained was a curious discovery in psychology—unless.

I selected the calendar again. The murderer, a maniac would return—he would return at the next full moon.

My hair suddenly rose. The moon was full that night! And the sky outside was absolutely cloudless.

Already I had spent so much time on this lunar theory that it was half past 11. Another half hour—and, would it be myself or the new housekeeper? I had secured who would serve as the tonics' next victim.

Quickly I drew two revolvers from the drawer of my desk. I turned out the lights and sat in the darkened front room, my ears straining for the first sound.

It seemed to me that I sat thus for hours before I heard a slight noise in the kitchen—a faint scratching.

I rushed through my bedroom and the narrow hall past the servant's room. At the kitchen door I halted for an instant, staring into the blackness until I could make out the dimly outlined windows.

The scratching came again. The utter blackness was hardly broken where the windows faced the dull brick walls. I waited.

The scratching was repeated. It came again and again. I crept out into the middle of the room, taking pains to avoid touching a chair or a table. I stopped and listened.

"I could hear the sound more distinctly, how! At least I believed I could trace its direction. It came from the window by the pantry door. I thought, 'As I reached this condition it stopped.'"

Once more I waited—until I could stand the suspense no longer.

I struck a match and lighted the gas, keeping my eyes riveted upon the window.

As the flame flared up I barely stifled a scream of terror.

A mouse, frightened at the light, turned and ran almost from under my feet back into the pantry.

Only the wrought-up condition of my nerves could account for my fail to recognize the sound it had made. I supposed it was now time to put midnight, but my watch told me it was but five minutes past 12.

Trembling, almost faint with the sudden let down from the strain of unseeing fear, I turned on the light again and started back to my vigil in the front room.

I reached my own bedroom. My blood suddenly froze with horror. Never had I seen it before in the years I had lived in that suit, but now—

A large square of light, as the moon peered through the angle of the V-shaped court, lay full over the pillow of my bed!

Over the Mark.

"Does he aim at realism in the stories he writes?"

"He may aim at it, but he doesn't hit within a million miles of it."

"How's that?"

"The hero of his last story is a 'spend-thrift Scotchman.'—Houston Post.

NO EXCUSE FOR "AIN'T."

It is About the Worst Contraction in the English Language.

"Ain't" is an improper abbreviation of "are not." British writers spell it "aint," which properly indicates its derivation. Americans make it an inclusive offense, using it for "are not" and "is not," as well as for "are not" and "is not." It is unquestionably the worst instance of slovenliness in the common speech of today.

Yet it is by no means of universal or even common use. It is withally occasionally from refined lips, always with a jar to the ear, and as well as to the hearer. But the habitual user of "ain't" is careless of refinement. He may be an excellent citizen who never beats his wife nor kicks the cat. But there is likely to be something shipshape about him somewhere. For "ain't" is needless, as "as" is superfluous. It fills no void and supplies no need.

English observers complain superciliously of the laxness of American speech. The marvols of Lancashire, Yorkshire, Devonshire and other shires dialects are inclined to resent any assumption of British superiority. But it is none the less desirable to eliminate our own linguistic sins, and of these "ain't" is the most deplorable.

Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Food Values.

Food values of edibles in common use are given by the department of agriculture as follows: Rice, 86.00; wheat, 82.54; corn, 82.70; oats, 74.02; maize, 82.94; potatoes, 23.24; fat beef, 46.03; lean beef, 21.88.

Rivalry.

"Have you given up your singing lessons?" asked Maude.

"Yes," replied Maymie. "Father's fond of music, and he says he's tired of having me break in and interrupt the phonograph."—Washington Star.

NOTICE OF SHERIFF SALE.

Notice is hereby given that by virtue of an execution and order of sale issued out of the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon, for Sherman County, upon a decree foreclosing a certain mortgage in a suit wherein Franklin G. King was plaintiff and Lilly G. Hauser, G. C. King, and Mrs. S. G. King, husband and wife, were defendants, which execution and order of sale directs me to sell the real estate described below to satisfy the sum of \$468.40, with interest at 8 per cent from the 14th day of November 1917, and \$100 attorneys fees and \$19 costs and disbursements.

Now, therefore, pursuant to the commands of said execution I will on the 12th day of January, 1918, at the hour of 2 o'clock p.m. at the court house door in Moro, Sherman County, Oregon, sell at public auction to the highest bidder for cash in hand the following described real property: Lots three (3) and four (4), section seven (7), township four (4) south of range eighteen (18) east of the Willamette meridian, Sherman County, Oregon.

Dated this 29th day of November, 1917. J. G. McKean, Sheriff of Sherman County, Oregon.

4th-6021

Keep Clean

Keep clean inside, as well as outside. Do not allow food poisons to accumulate in your bowels. Headaches, a sign of self-poisoning, will point to numerous other troubles which are sure to follow. Keep yourself well, as thousands of others do, by taking, when needed, a dose of two of the old, reliable, vegetable, family liver medicine.

Thedford's Black-Draught

Mrs. Maggie Bladsoe, Oswatonic, Kan., says: "Black-Draught cured me of constipation of 15 years standing, which nothing had been able to help. I was also a slave to stomach trouble. Everything I ate would sour on my stomach. I used two packages of Black-Draught, and Oh! the blessed relief it has given me." Black-Draught should be on your shelf. Get a package today. Price 25c. One cent a dose.

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Western Electric

Farm Lighting Plant

Brighten Up The Farm

This is what a Western Electric Lighting Plant on your place will mean to you:

No dark nights.

No gas to explode.

No pressure tank to blow up.

No water to carry.

No lamps to fill.

No matches to burn.

No smoky chimneys to clean.

Turn a Switch anywhere day or night and get a good strong flood of light.

For Sale By

Walther-Williams Hdw. Co.

The Dalles, Oregon,

Agent for Wasco and Sherman Counties

Free Assay

If you have deposits of limestone, magnesite, marble, iron, chrome, manganese, silica, salts or alkali, send in particulars and samples for free test. We can handle commercially workable deposits.

Gold, silver, copper and other complete assays made at commercial rates. Send for rate card and literature on industrial chemistry.

CHARLES A. NEWHALL CO., Inc. Industrial Chemist—Assayer—Engineer 1810 Westlake Ave., SEATTLE, WASH.

ECONOMY

HERE is an economy wave over the land. American people are beginning to realize that they are living too fast, beyond their means. It has been the rule that the man with \$20,000 a year as well as the man with \$2,000 a year lives up to every penny of his income. Slowly but surely this order of things is changing. The era of extravagance and waste in business and personal expenses is nearing an end. Efficiency and economy is the order of the day. Bank deposits are growing.

It is up to every one to economize. The best and surest way to do so is to place your surplus in the bank. If you already have a bank account make it a point from today on to increase it. Add to it weekly, daily if possible.

IF YOU HAVEN'T A BANK ACCOUNT DECIDE TO OPEN ONE TODAY.

"Bank of Moro"

MORO, OREGON

Independent Warehouse & Milling Co.

R. H. McKean, Manager, Wasco, Oregon

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Room with privilege of bath, single, 75c up; double \$1.00 up.

Room with private bath, single \$1.50 up; double \$2.00 up.

Auto Meets Trains. Street cars from Union Depot pass our doors. Transfer at 5th and Gilean streets from North Bank Depot.

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