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IT WAS A PRIVATE QUARREL

By WILLIAM T. DAVANT

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DEVIL ANSE CANFIELD gazed quietly at the man before him. His thumb fumbled the hammer of a brown rifle, a nervous trick which had worn the steel smooth. "So ye want work?" he drawled, presently.

The man to whom he spoke was clad in overalls. His smooth-shaven face was tanned darkly. His upper lip had the peculiar puffy effect which betrayed the fact that a mustache had been sacrificed.

"Yes, I do."

"Whur're ye from? What kinda work kin ye do?"

The stranger met the searching gray eyes for the first time.

"Stranger," he said, frankly, "to be square with you, I ain't going to tell you where I come from. I'll say this much: I ain't always worn these kind of clothes and a look at my hands will show you that I ain't a laboring man, although I'm willing to do anything that will pay my board and keep for a month or two."

The case was not unusual. The country is well suited to the needs of men who have come under the displeasure of the law. On one side of Tug river is West Virginia, on the other lies the state of Kentucky. Hills, valleys, valleys and more hills; the landscape presents a monotonous ruggedness which discourages pursuit. Once across the river, the fugitive is safe until the slow process of extradition is gone through with.

Anse fumbled the hammer of his rifle, always keeping the muzzle directed toward the other.

"I'll take ye, furriner," he pronounced, after giving him due consideration. "Whenever ull ye be ready to go to work?"

"I'm ready now."

He picked up a bundle of clothes and prepared to follow his employer. The old man wheeled like a cat. "No ye don't!" he snarled, his eyes red suspicion. "Ye go fast."

Without a word the younger obeyed. At a clearing Canfield halted him. "Troy! Hey-o-o, Troy!" he shouted, his voice resounding in the typical mountaineer's call.

A tall lad appeared noiselessly behind them. On his shoulder was the inevitable rifle.

"Want me, dad?"

"Fetch this man a crow-bar an' shovel. He's goint grub th' pastor."

When the implements came, he set the stranger to work in the grueling afternoon sun, uprooting stumps in the clearing. During the operation he sat on the rail fence, an embodiment of somber menace. With his head sunk into his bowed shoulders he was never at rest. His keen gray eyes under shaggy brows darted now this way, now that; his beaked nose seemed to sniff the air suspiciously, his curly brown beard, shot with white, failed to hide the nervous twitching of a cruel mouth. And always he kept his rifle pointed in the direction of the worker.

At the mellow call of a horn, he slid to the ground and called his employee. "Supper," he announced, laconically. They fled to the house, the stranger in front. An elderly woman met them at the door.

"My new hand," the Devil said, by way of introduction. The woman murmured something and led the way into the kitchen.

Anse played the part of host with a hospitality bred in the bone of the mountaineer. He pressed fried chicken and squirrel and all the viands which constitute the highland menu upon his guest. But the stranger noticed the boy, Troy, sat in front of the stove with a rifle across his knees and never took his eyes from his face.

The meal finished, the host escorted the laborer into the living room. A certain look of constraint seemed to leave him as he picked up his rifle and fumbled the hammer.

He caught his guest's eye and chuckled: "Somehow I don't never seem right unless I'm totin' ole Betsy."

"I reckon there are some pretty tough men in these hills," the other responded, looking with concern at his blistered palms.

"They's five thousand dollars reward fer me in Kaintuck an' I haffer be keeful. I hain't one uh th' McBees. My men knows 'em all an' they hain't one uh 'em could cross Tug river alive. What I'm nervous about is these here smart, Jack detectives. They hain't nothin' to hinder 'em from comin' to me, like ye done, fer a job, an' waltin' fer a chance to capture me when I hain't on my guard."

"That's why you carry the rifle with you all the time," exclaimed the hired man, in sudden enlightenment.

The Devil brooded in portentous silence. The other bustled himself pricking with his pocket-knife the water blisters caused by his strenuous afternoon.

"Hit's this away," Anse fumbled, suddenly, "I hain't never harmed a soul whut hain't fust harmed me. I wants live in peace with my feller man, but things has happened, which they won't let me."

"Them McBees butchered my brother. He was my pal, my playmate. They filled him with lead an' cut twenty-five wounds in his body—all on ac-

count uh some pigs, which they wa'n't with a dollar.

"I hain't never harmed th' state uh Kaintuck. All I've did is to kill ev'ry man I c'n find whut helped kill my brother. I hain't hurt none uh them th' state sent after me, although they wuz meddlin' in a personal matter whut is jus' between th' McBees an' Canfel's."

He got up and faced his listener. "Whut ye got to do with hit, Bill Hardin? Whut business is hit uh yours?" A vein of railery ran through his next words. "But I forgot. Ye didn't come fer me, but jus' wanted a job. Hev ye got enough uh grubbin' stumps?"

The detective sat quietly in his chair, his eyes half-closed. "Anse, you've caught me with the goods."

"I reckernized ye as soon as I seen ye. Shavin' off a mustache hain't much uh a disguise, Bill."

"Well, Anse," Hardin arose and met his eyes fearlessly, "what you going to do about it?"

"Ye know whut I oughta do. But I don't want no trouble with th' state. Ye've et my grub, ye kin sleep in my house tonight. Tomorrow I'll drive ye to th' station in time to catch Number Four. But don't never come back out here, Bill."

"Is that threat?"

"Take hit as a warnin', Bill. Ye're squar' an' ye've got nerve. I don't want nothin' to happen to ye in my country."

The detective yawned. "I think you said something about a bed," he suggested.

The feudist lighted a tallow-dip and pointed to the steep stairway. Hardin took the light out of his hand and started to climb upstairs.

"Wait a minute, Bill," the Devil called. "Less have ev'rything straight between us. We uns is awful light sleepers an' mighty nervous. Whenever we hear a soun' in th' night we shoot fust an' look afterwards. Gln ye walk in yer sleep ye'd better fassen th' door so's ye can't open it less'n ye're wide awake."

The next morning Anse presided at the breakfast table with his homely grace. Hardin ate a hearty meal, expressing his appreciation by the keenness of his appetite.

A gleam came into his eyes as he got in the buggy beside his host and noticed that the brown old rifle had been left behind.

The mountaineer was by nature a tactful soul and the law officer was busy with his thoughts, therefore the drive was finished in silence.

As the train pulled in, Anse reached in his pocket.

"Bill," he drawled, a humorous light in his deep-set eyes, "th' Good Book says that th' laborer is worthy uh his hire"; with the words, he dropped a silver dollar in Hardin's blistered palm.

The detective reached back to put the coin in his pocket. His hand flashed up holding a revolver.

"I don't see any reason why you shouldn't take the trip with me," he remarked, cheerfully.

The old man shook his head gloomily. "Put hit back, Bill, I'm disappointed with ye. Ye'd oughta know me better. I don't trust no man furrer back than a fust cousin an' I expected this."

"Cut that out," Hardin snapped triumphantly. "Get aboard."

For answer the outlaw whistled shrilly. Half a dozen loafers on the platform were transformed into alert mountain men. They bounded toward the detective and surrounded him with leveled revolvers. Anse chuckled at the changed expression of Hardin's face and waved them away.

"Ye see, Bill, they're my people. They'd die fer me like I'd die fer 'em. Ye bin buttin' in on a private quar' an' ye don't deserve to git away. Jump on yer train an' go back to Roanoke whar ye belong before I change my min'. An' don't never come back!"

The officer shrugged his shoulders and thrust his gun back in his pocket. "Good-by, Anse," he called from the platform of the last coach.

Devil Anse Canfield stood and watched the train disappear in the East. His thumb felt vainly for its wonted occupation; a look of fear sprang into his eyes.

"Troy, Troy-o-y!" he yelled, shrilly. The boy ran to him.

"Whur's Betsy?"

The lad handed her to him. The feel of the cold steel reassured him. With a sigh of relief he turned to his buggy, his thumb twiddling the worn hammer as a dog licks his master's shoe.

"Come on, kid; less go home," he drawled.

Fires in Forests

It is not practicable to equip forests with lightning rods. No remedy is now in sight for disastrous forest fires due to lightning, such as have occurred on a vast scale in the western states during the last season. When lightning strikes a tree the ordinary result is to splinter the wood or strip off bark through the sudden generation of steam. In the great majority of cases the tree is not set on fire. Nevertheless the aggregate number of forest fires started by lightning is, in many parts of the country, greater than the number due to all other causes combined.

Odd Way to Pay Tax

A southern Ohio taxpayer, being assessed 8 cents as his federal income tax, originally mailed postage stamps covering this amount, but was informed that stamps were not acceptable. Then the collector received a small block of wood, in which a hole had been bored and 8 cents secreted. A corn cob was used as a stopper to hold the money in place.

ROAD BUILDING

JOHN LISKA WROTE BEST ROAD ESSAY

John Liska, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., wrote the best essay in the 1925 national good roads essay contest for the Harvey S. Firestone four-years' university scholarship. The subject of his essay, which told in simple form the epic story of a country crossroads, was "The Relation of Improved Highways to Home Life." Liska is the fifth high-school student to earn this honor and award.

The contest is conducted each year under the auspices of the highway education board, Washington, D. C., of which the United States commissioner of education is chairman. It is strictly educational in character and in the several states is sponsored by one of the leading universities, or by the state department of education.

Mr. Liska's essay follows: Isolation is the primary cause of the ignorance so evident in rural communities. Poor roads, more than anything else, have forced the farm home into a demoralizing isolation. The improvement of highways, making the consolidated school and social center possible, is injecting new life into homes formerly hopelessly isolated. Home life is broadened and enriched. Boys are willing to stay "down on the farm." Girls cease to envy their city cousins and to leave home for "the bright lights."

Just a few minutes of travel, on a particular road leading out of the city of Wisconsin Rapids, will convince the most doubtful skeptic of the value of good roads and their influence upon home life. About two miles from the city this road branches. One branch is called "the left road"; the other "the right road." The left road is almost always in a deplorable condition; the right road is hard-surfaced. The homes on the left road are dilapidated, the front yards scarcely recognizable among the tangle of broken machinery, old wire and various other objects placed "out of the way." The land has been cropped until it is impossible for even quick grass to flourish. The stock, descendants of some grand-dad's scrubs, is now so degenerated that scarcely any characteristics of a high-producing, profitable animal are evident.

Can you expect the boy or girl to remain on the farm under these conditions? Not one boy or girl living on this road has any education above the eighth grade, and very many have not even progressed that far. These young people, many of them lying about their ages, have had to seek a "job" at the store, mill or factory, instead of completing their education. Can home life be pleasant and happy where these conditions exist?

The road to the right leads through land slightly more fertile, but more fertile only as a result of better farm management. No farm home on this road, for a distance of twenty miles, is without at least one modern convenience. Several farms are equipped with every modern convenience, both in and out of the home.

The esthetic influence a good road exerts is very evident. Often it stimulates latent self-respect into practical expression. These people are continually adding some improvement in an honest attempt to beautify their home surroundings. Through diversification and rotation of crops they have succeeded in bringing their land to a high degree of fertility, resulting in a more stable income each year. They are sending their children to high schools, agricultural schools and universities. A better education is teaching these children to realize the value of a true home.

In a large measure, on the road to the left, the average farmer has lost his self-respect, has allowed his home to fall below the standard, and has failed to keep in stride with the times. He is considered inferior to city people. Farmers, such as those on the right road, are again placing the farm home upon the pinnacle where it should rest, "The True Home of Man."

How necessary to that home is a good road! What a relief it must have been to those simple folk in Whittier's "Snow Bound" to have the road opened and the floundering carrier bring the village paper to the door!

The left road may be compared to the snow-bound road, impeding progress, forcing isolation. The right road may be compared to the opened road, offering new opportunities, new possibilities and new happiness.

The right road is, in the true sense of the word, the "right road." We must build more of them. Until this is accomplished home life in isolated sections will, in the future, simply exist; but when all roads are "right roads," these same communities, these same homes, will live.

Much Road Building

An interesting feature of this year's road building is the evident willingness of both counties and states to assume building through issuance of highway bond issues. Sixty millions of dollars have been spent since 1913 on the Lincoln highway alone for improvements, and many millions more will be spent during the few years just ahead on this great 3,100-mile transcontinental road, which stretches from the Hudson river to San Francisco bay.

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Purely Myth.

The belief that the tail of a snake after the head is cut off or the rest of the snake is killed lives until sunset is merely an old myth. Owing to the reaction of the snake's nervous system its tail will continue to wiggle long after the snake is otherwise apparently dead. But there is nothing to th notion that it will continue to wiggle until sunset and then stop. Sometimes it will stop before and sometimes after sunset. — Pathfinder Magazine.

The Dependable Man.

Give us a man, young or old, high or low, on whom we know we can thoroughly depend, who will stand firm when others fall; the friend faithful and true, the adviser honest and fearless, the adversary just and chivalrous—in such a one there is a fragment of the Rock of Ages. — Dean Stanley.

Twins Had Same Idea.

Probably the most remarkable and authentic story concerning twins is that of A., a twin, who bought a set of champagne glasses in a town in Scotland as a surprise for his brother, B., who at the same time bought a set of exactly the same pattern in England as a present for A.

Had Many Successors.

"Pinafore" was first introduced in the United States at the Standard theater in New York city in 1789. Mrs. Thomas Whiffen was the original Little Buttercup.

Cannibalistic Spiders.

Spiders were found by the Mount Everest expedition 4,000 feet higher than any vegetable growth. The spiders are believed to feed upon one another.

What Job Escaped.

Another thing old Job escaped—and it is probably one of the reasons he was so patient—was having someone come smiling around as he sat there among the ashes, scraping himself with a potsherd, and telling him just to think the right thought and he'd soon be perfectly well and happy. — Ohio State Journal.

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Founded by Champlain.

The earliest founding of any Canadian city was that of Port Royal, now Annapolis Royal, in Nova Scotia, founded by Champlain and his associates in 1605, but this colony was withdrawn a couple of years later. The Port Royal that appears in the later history of old Acadia was founded in 1636 by D'Aunay Charnisay.

Reaching the Top.

The men who reach the top seldom wait for a lift. They are climbing while others are waiting for a boost. The higher they climb the more room they have, for there's always room on top, though it may be ever so crowded at the bottom where all must start. — Grit.

Rush for Home Sites.

When Oklahoma was thrown open to white settlers after the federal government had purchased it from the Creek Indians in 1889, it is estimated that 100,000 persons took part in the rush for claims.

High Price, Considering.

Father—"I had no idea that your studies would cost so much!" Son—"They ought not to father. I don't study very much!" — Pele Mole, Paris.

Flattery's a Compliment.

Flattery pleases greatly. In the first place, the flatterer may think what he says to be true, but, in the second place, whether he thinks so or not, he certainly thinks those whom he flatters of consequence enough to be flattered. — Doctor Johnson.

Classifying Peanut.

The peanut is a pea rather than a nut and belongs to the same group of plants as do beans and common garden peas, differing only in that it possesses the character of blooming above ground and maturing its fruit or pod beneath the surface of the soil.

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Common Sign Language.

Travelers in the interior of South America, although knowing little or nothing of the language of the Indians, claim that an astonishing amount of communication may be held by means of a sign language. The different Indian groups of Brazil, for instance, while speaking each a different language, have a more or less common language of signs.

State Named from River.

Wisconsin derived its name from the principal river, named Masconsin by Pere Marquette, translated wild, rushing channel. The present spelling is derived from a misprint. All early French documents have Ouisconsin or Misconsin.

Down on the Farm.

"The only worker I ever knew who would work when the boss was away was the old-fashioned American hired man," declared a professor at Grand Rapids. We have known a couple of them to sit on a fence at such times and work until their jaws were totally exhausted.

Already Free.

During the Sunday School lesson the teacher made reference to a passage of Scripture reading, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." A little girl in the front row exclaimed: "I'm already free. I'm free and a half."

One Way to Reduce.

A rather robust woman recently asked a doctor what she should do to reduce. "Take a certain kind of exercise," said he. "What kind do you recommend?" she asked. "Push yourself away from the table three times a day" replied the doctor.—Topeka Capital.

Meat Distribution.

Two-thirds of the live stock used for food is raised west of the Mississippi, while two-thirds of the consumers live east of the Mississippi. This accounts for the 1,500 packing houses occupied in converting live stock into meats and transferring them to markets.

Remark Left Impression.

A man and his wife were buying a horse. "How could such a lovely creature have a temper?" asked the woman. "My dear, that is exactly what passed through my mind when I married you," answered the man, and he has not heard the last of it yet.

Word for the Cyclone.

About the only good thing that can be said about cyclone is that it doesn't cost the taxpayers anything for an investigation as to who was to blame. —Des Moines Register.

Slight Accident Fatal.

A young man in London who was struck on the head by a chicken bone used as a missile died of septic pneumonia set up by the slight scalp wound he had received.

Final Adjudication.

Though reading and conversation may furnish us with many ideas of men and things, yet it is our own meditation must form our judgment.

Oxalic Acid in Rhubarb.

Rhubarb, when eaten in excess, has been known to act as a powerful poison on account of its natural content of oxalic acid.—Science Service.

Must Move Fast.

The lowest speed at which it is possible for an airplane to fly is 3 1/4 miles an hour.

Mankind's Duty.

Life is a problem; mortal man was made to solve the solemn problem, right or wrong.—J. Q. Adams.

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