

O. Henry Stories

VIII. The Ethics of Pig

By O. HENRY

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IN an eastbound train I went into the smoker and found Jefferson Peters, the only man with a brain west of the Washash river who can use his cerebrum, cerebellum and medulla oblongata at the same time. Jeff is in the line of unalleged graft. He is not to be dreaded by widows and orphans; he is a reducer of surplusage. His favorite disguise is that of the target bird at which the spendthrift or the reckless investor may shy a few inconsequential dollars. He is readily vocalized by tobacco; so, with the aid of two thick and easy burning browns, I got the story of his latest Autolycean adventure.

"In my line of business," said Jeff, "the hardest thing is to find an upright, trustworthy, strictly honorable partner to work a graft with. Some of the best men I ever worked with in a swindle would resort to trickery at times."

"So last summer I think I will go over into this section of country where I hear the serpent has not yet entered and see if I can find a partner naturally gifted with a talent for crime, but not yet contaminated by success."

"I found a village that seemed to show the right kind of a layout. The inhabitants hadn't found out that Adam had been dispossessed and were going right along naming the animals and killing snakes just as if they were in the garden of Eden. They call this town Mount Nebo, and it's up near the spot where Kentucky and West Virginia and North Carolina corner to gether. Them states don't meet? Well, it was in that neighborhood, anyway."

"After putting in a week proving I wasn't a revenue officer, I went over to the store where the rude fourthushers of the hamlet lived, to see if I could get a line on the kind of man I wanted."

"Gentlemen," says I after we rubbed noses and gathered 'round the dried apple barrel, "I don't suppose there's another community in the whole world into which sin and chicanery has less extensively permeated than this. Life here, where all the women are brave and propitious, honest, indeed, he a fool. It reminds me," says I, "of old Stein's beautiful ballad entitled 'The Disserted Village,' which says:

"'Til faces the land, to hastening ill a prey;
What art can drive its charms away?
The judge rode slowly down the lane,
For 'in to be queen of the May.'"

"Why, yes, Mr. Peters," says the storekeeper. "I reckon we air about as moral and torpid a community as there be on the mounting, according to ceas-
sures of opinion, but I reckon you ain't ever met Rufe Tatum."

"Why, no," says the town constable, "he can't hardly have ever. That air Rufe is shore the most monstrous sealawag that has escaped hangin' on the galluses. And that puts me in mind that I ought to have turned Rufe out of the lock-up day before yesterday. The thirty days be got for killin' Yance Goodloe was up then. He steals hogs."

"A day or two more won't hurt Rufe any, though."

"Shucks, now," says I in the mournful idiom, "don't tell me there's a man in Mount Nebo as bad as that."

"Worse," says the storekeeper. "He steals hogs."

"I think I will look up this Mr. Tatum. So a day or two after the constable turned him out I got acquainted with him and invited him out on the edge of town to sit on a log and talk business."

"What I wanted was a partner with a natural rural makup to play a part in some little one act outrages that I was going to look with the Pittfall & Chin circuit in some of the western towns, and this R. Tatum was born for the role as sure as nature cast Fairbanks for the stuff that kept Ella from slinking into the river."

"He was about the size of a first baseman, and he had ambiguous blue eyes like the china dog on the mantel-piece that Aunt Harriet used to play with when she was a child. His hair waxed a little bit, like the statue of the diskus thrower in the Vacation at Rome, but the color of it reminded you of the 'Sunset in the Grand Canyon,' by an American artist, that they hang over the storepipe holes in the saloons."

"He was the Hugs, without needing a touch. You'd have known him for one, even if you'd seen him on the vaudeville stage with one cotton suspender and a straw over his ear."

"I told him what I wanted and found him ready to jump at the job."

"Overlooking such a trivial little peccadillo as the habit of manslaughter," says I, "what have you accomplished in the way of indirect brigandage or nonactionable thieftiness that you could point to, with or without pride, as an evidence of your qualifications for the position?"

"Why," says he in his kind of southern system of procrastinated accents, "hain't you heard tell? There ain't any man, black or white, in the Blue Ridge that can tote off a shout as easy as I can without bein' heard, seen or catched. I can lift a shout," he goes on, "out of a pen, from under a piazza, at the trough, in the woods, day or night, anywhere or anyhow, and I guarantee nobody won't hear a squeal. It's all in the way you grab hold of 'em and carry 'em afterward. Some day," goes on this gentle despoiler of pigpens, "I hope to become reekralized as the champion stout stealer of the world."

"It's proper to be ambitious," says I, "and hog stealing will do very well for Mount Nebo, but in the outside world, Mr. Tatum, it would be considered as crude a piece of business as a bear raid on Ray State Gas. However, it will do as a guarantee of good faith. We'll go into partnership. I've got \$1,000 cash capital, and with that and homeward plods atmosphere of yours we ought to be able to win out a few shares of Soon Parted preferred in the money market."

"So I attaches Rufe, and we go away from Mount Nebo down into the lowlands. And all the way I coach him for his part in the grafts I had in mind. I had lided away two months on the Florida coast and was feeling all to the Ponce de Leon, besides having so many new schemes up my sleeve that I had to wear kid gloves to hold 'em."

"I intended to assume a funnel shape and mow a path nine miles wide through the farming belt of the middle west, so we headed in that direction. But when we got as far as Lexington we found Binkley Bros' circus there and the blue grass peasantry romping into town and pounding the Belgian blocks with their hand pegged sabots as artless and arbitrary as an extra session of a Datto Bryan drama. I never pass a circus without pulling the valve cord and coming down for a little Key West money, so I engaged a couple of rooms and board for Rufe and me at a house near the circus grounds run by a widow lady named Peevy. Then I took Rufe to a clothing store and gents' outfitted him. He showed up strong, as I knew he would, after he was rigged up in the ready-made rutabaga regalia. Me and old Misitzky stuffed him into a bright blue suit with a Nile green visible plaid effect and riveted on a fancy vest of a light Tuskegee normal tan color, a red necktie and the yellowest pair of shoes in town. They were the first clothes Rufe had ever worn except the stug ham layette and the kumquat top dressing of his native kral, and he looked as self-conscious as an Igorrote with a new nose ring."

"That night I went down to the circus tents and opened a small shell game. Rufe was to be the capper. I gave him a roll of phony currency to bet with and kept a bunch of it in a special pocket to pay his winnings out of. No, I didn't mistrust him, but I simply can't manipulate the ball to lose when I see real money bet. My fingers go on a strike every time I try it."

"I set up my little table and began to show them how easy it was to guess which shell the little pea was under. The unlettered hinds gathered in a thick semicircle and began to under show and boister one another to bet. Then when Rufe called the turn on the little joker for a few tens and dimes to get them started. But no Rufe. I'd seen him two or three times walking about and looking at the sideshow pictures with his mouth full of peanut candy, but he never came nigh."

"The crowd picked a little, but trying to work the shells without a capper is like fishing without bait. I closed the game with only \$42 of the unearned increment, while I had been counting on yanking the yemen for \$200 at least. I went home at 11 and went to bed. I supposed that the circus had proved too alluring for Rufe and that he had succumbed to it, conceit and all, but I meant to give him a lecture on general business principles in the morning."

"Just after Morpheus had got both my shoulders to the snuck mattress I hears a houseful of unbesouling and child noises, like a youngster screeching with green apple cole. I opens my door and exits into the hall for the widow lady, and when she sticks her head out I says, 'Mrs. Peevy, ma'am, would you mind chokin' off that kid of yours so that honest people can get their rest?'"

"'Sis,' says she, 'it's no child of mine. It's the pig squealing that your friend Mr. Tatum brought home to his room a couple of hours ago. And if you are unnie or second cousin or brother to it I'd appreciate your stopping its mouth, sir, yourself if you please.'"

"I put on some of the polite outside habiliments of external society and went into Rufe's room. He had got up and lit his lamp and was pouring some milk into a tin pan on the floor for a dingy white, half grown, squealing pig."

"How is this, Rufe?" says I. "You fuddled him in your part of the work tonight and put the game on crutches. And how do you explain the pig? It looks like back-sliding to me."

"Now don't be too hard on me, Jeff," says he. "You know how long I've been used to stealing shoats. It's got to be a habit with me. And to night, when I see such a fine chance, I couldn't help takin' it."

"Well," says I, "maybe you're real ly got kleptomaniac. And maybe when we get out of the pig belt you'll turn your mind to higher and more remunerative misconduct. Why you should want to stain your soul with such a distasteful, feeble minded, perverted, roaring beast as that I can't understand."

"Why, Jeff," says he, "you ain't in sympathy with shoats. You don't understand 'em like I do. This here seems to me to be an animal of more than common powers of ratiion and intelligence. He walked half across the room on his hind legs while ago."

"Well, I'm going back to bed," says I. "See if you can impress it upon your friend's ideas of intelligence that he's not to make so much noise."

"He was hungry," says Rufe. "He'll go to sleep and keep quiet now."

"I always get up before breakfast and read the morning paper whenever I happen to be within the radius of a Hoos cylinder or a Washington hand press. The next morning I got up early and found the Lexington daily on the front porch where the carrier had thrown it. The first thing I saw in it was a double column ad. on the front page that read like this:

FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS REWARD.
The above amount will be paid, and no questions asked, for the return, alive and unharmed, of Beppo, the famous European educated pig, that strayed or was stolen from the side show tents of Binkley Bros' circus last night.

GEO. B. TAPLEY,
Business Manager, at the Circus Grounds.
"I folded up the paper flat, put it into my inside pocket and went to Rufe's room. He was nearly dressed and was feeding the pig the rest of the milk and some apple peelings."

"Well, well, well, good morning all," I says, hearty and amiable. "So we are up? And play is having his breakfast. What had you intended doing with that pig, Rufe?"

"I'm going to crate him up," says Rufe, "and express him to me in Mount Nebo. He'll be company for her while I am away."

"He's a mighty fine pig," says I, scratching him on the back.

"You called him a lot of names last night," says Rufe.

"Oh, well," says I, "he looks better to me this morning. I was raised on a farm, and I'm very fond of pigs. I used to go to bed at sundown, so I never saw one by lamplight before."

"George B. hustles out of his tent and asks me to follow. We got into one of the side shows. In there was a jolt black pig, with a pink ribbon around his neck, lying on some hay and eating carrots that a man was feeding to him."

"Hey, Mac," calls G. B. "Nothing wrong with the worldwide this morning, is there?"

"Him? No," says the man. "He's got an appetite like a chorus girl at 1 a. m."

"How'd did you get this pipe?" says Tapley to me. "Eating too many pork chops last night?"

"I pulls out the paper and shows him the ad."

"Fakes," says he. "Don't know anything about it. You've beheld with your own eyes the marvelous, worldwide porcine wonder of our four footed kingdom eating with preternatural sagacity his matrimonial meal, unstrayed and unstoic. Good morning!"

"I was beginning to see. I got in the wagon and told Uncle Ned to drive to the most adjacent office of the nearest alley. There I took out my pig, got the range carefully for the other opening, set his sights and gave him such a kick that he went out the other end of the alley, twenty feet ahead of his squeal."

"Then I paid Uncle Ned his 50 cents and walked down to the newspaper office. I wanted to hear if in cold syllables I got the advertising man to his window."

"To decide a bet," says I, "I wasn't the man who had this ad put in last night short and fat, with long whiskers and a club foot?"

"He was not," says the man. "He would measure about six feet by four and a half inches, with cornsick hair and dressed like the pansies of the conservatory."

"At dinner time I went back to Mrs. Peevy's."

"Shall I keep some soup hot for Mr. Tatum till he comes back?" she asks.

"If you do, ma'am," says I, "you'll more than exhaust for firewood all the coal in the bosom of the earth and all the forests on the outside of it."

"So there, you see," said Jefferson Peters in conclusion, "how hard it is to find a fair minded and honest business partner."

"But," I began, with the freedom of long acquaintance, "the rule should work both ways. If you had offered to divide the reward you would not have lost."

"That don't involve the same principles at all," said he. "Mine was a legitimate and moral attempt at speculation. Buy low and sell high. Don't Wall street indorse it? Bulls and bears and pigs—what's the difference? Why not bristles as well as horns and furs?"

A Monorail Ride.
Rutinsky, who heard some traveling men talking about the monorail, adopted his usual tactics.

"I rode on one of those once," he piped in.

"A single rail?"

"I'll bet you did," replied one of the drummers, "and I'll also bet there was a man carrying each end of the rail."

—Judge

Touring for Suffrage, Autoists Begin Their Transcontinental Trip



NEW YORK APR. 9 1916
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WILL TOUR COUNTRY FOR SUFFRAGE

Charges of Grafting Stir Canada's Depths



GEN. HUGHES (ABOVE) PREMIER, BORDEN

(More than the war, the assertions that there has been graft in the furnishing of war munitions is agitating Canada. The charges reach into the highest quarters. It was even intimated that Premier Robert L. Borden would resign. Among the other men mentioned is General Sam Hughes, head of the Dominion forces, who went to England recently to look after the Canadian soldiers sent there before leaving for the front.)

Claims Southern Pacific Robbed Government

Washington, April 14.—Lieutenant Commander J. O. Richardson of the navy, testifying in federal court today in the government's proceedings to obtain valuable oil lands held by the Southern Pacific under congressional grant, declared that the railroad must have known the value of the disputed property when the grant was made.
It is the government's contention that the Southern Pacific acquired the territory fraudulently, while knowing its value. The railroads maintain it did not know the lands worth.
Richardson testified that as early as 1862 experiments proved that oil was valuable as fuel. The land grant was made about 1895. Richardson said the British admiralty, the American navy and many engineering and scientific societies published reports of oils value as fuel about the time the grants were made.

REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS

- Ira J. White et ux to Joel C. Ernest, lots 1, 2, 7 and 8, blk. 3, Elmer's add Mt. Angel.
- C. H. Ernst et ux to Julius L. and Ella L. Jewett, 10 acres in 19-4-2W.
- James M. Wadsworth et ux to Alfred H. Hunt, part of 30-0-3E.
- T. D. Rieck et ux to R. and A. Kennedy et ux, lots 7, 8 and 9, Kennedy acres.
- Earl C. Simmons et ux to Laurence E. Simmons, part Davis Shannon et al. 6-1-W.
- Jacob Stroud et ux to T. B. and Cora M. Kay, pt. R. E. Edmanson et al. 62-8-1W.
- Wm. Esch as sheriff to Fiera M. Murphy, lots 2 and 3, blk. 8, Tusedo Park add, Salem.
- Fred M. Olmstead et ux to Edward Olmstead, lot 2, blk. 9, Depot add, Salem.
- Emma Hurst to Anna Hansen, parts of lots 5 and 6, blk. 1, A. Myers' add, Salem.
- Franklin B. Alford et ux to Falls City Lumber company, lots 9 and 10, blk. 2, Riverview Park add, Salem.
- C. F. DeGuire et ux to I. S. and Lisbeth Moe, pt. Jas. Brown et al. 47-6-1W.
- Hans Nelson et ux to P. H. and Minnie Nelson, pt. B. Shanks et al. 25-5-1W.
- J. B. Kennedy et ux to Philip and Julia Olsen, A. Bower et al. 53-4-2W.
- Katie and J. P. Holmes to J. E. Kirkpatrick, N. Bond et al. 28-7-2W; J. Lehman et al. 28-7-2W; Jas. Reiley et al. 31-7-2W.
- P. W. Reyeltes et ux to Gen. A. Thompson, pt. lot 11, Miller's Mill creek, Rural Home.
- Jas. A. French et ux to E. K. Spyster, pt. lot 2 and all of lots 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, blk. 3, Pleasant Home add, Salem.
- J. M. Kavanaugh et ux to E. K. Spyster, lot 19, blk. 2, Burlington add, Salem.

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Taking No Chances With Border Mexicans



SEARCHING MEXICAN SUSPECT

(Although Pershing and Dodd found a friendly spirit toward Americans in their pursuit of Villa, vigilance along the border, in view of the possibility of more attacks like that on Columbus, N. M., has not been relaxed. Every Mexican entering the United States, like the one in the picture, being examined by a border guard, has to submit to a rigid search for contraband.)

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