

O. Henry Stories

XI.—A Technical Error.

By O. HENRY

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NEVER cared especially for feuds, believing them to be even more overrated products of our country than grapefruit, scrapple or honeymoons. Nevertheless, if I may be allowed, I will tell you of an Indiana Territory feud of which I was press agent, camp follower and accessory during the fact.

I was on a visit to Sam Durkee's ranch, where I had a great time following off unmaneuvered ponies and waving my bare hand at the lower jaws of wolves about two miles away. Sam was a hardened person of about twenty-five, with a reputation for going home in the dark with perfect equanimity, though often with reluctance.

Over in the Creek nation was a family bearing the name of Tatum. I was told that the Durkees and Tatums had been feuding for years. Several of each family had bitten the grass, and it was expected that more Nebuchadnezzars would follow. A younger generation of each family was growing up, and the grass was keeping pace with them. But I gathered that they had fought fairly; that they had not lain in cornfields and aimed at the division of their enemies' suspenders in the back—partly, perhaps, because there were no cornfields, and nobody wore more than one suspender. Nor had any woman or child of either house ever been harmed.

Sam Durkee had a girl. Her name was Ella Baynes. They appeared to be devoted to each other and to have perfect confidence in each other, as all couples do who are and have or aren't and haven't. She was tolerably pretty, with a heavy mass of brown hair that helped her along. He introduced me to her, which seemed not to lessen her preference for him, so I reasoned that they were surely soul mates.

Miss Baynes lived in Kingsfisher, twenty miles from the ranch. Sam lived on a gallop between the two places.

One day there came to Kingsfisher a courageous young man, rather small, with smooth face and regular features. He made many inquiries about the business of the town and especially of the inhabitants cognominally. He said he was from Muskegee, and he looked it, with his yellow shoes and crocheted four-to-hand. I met him once when I rode in for the mail. He said his name was Beverly Travers, which seemed rather improbable.

One day when I was messenger for half a gross of cigarette papers and a couple of wagon tires I saw the alleged Beverly Travers in a yellow wheeled buggy with Ella Baynes, driving about town as ostentatiously as the black wax and would permit. I knew that this information would bring no harm to Ella or Sam's soul, so I refrained from including it in the news of the city that I retailed on my return. But on the next afternoon an elongated ex-cowboy of the name of Simmons, an old time pal of Sam's, who kept a feed store in Kingsfisher, rode out to the ranch and rolled and burned many cigarettes before he would talk. When he did make oration his words were these:

"Sam, say, there's been a description of a galoot miscegenist himself Bevel Baged Travels impairing the atmosphere of Kingsfisher for the past two weeks. You know who he was? He was not otherwise than Ben Tatum, from the Creek Nation, son of old copper Tatum that your Uncle Ned shot last February. You know what he done this morning? He killed your brother Lester—shot him in the colt-house yard."

I wondered if Sam had heard. He puffed a twig from a mesquite bush, chewed it a moment and said: "He did, did he? He killed Lester?" "The same," said Simmons. "And he did more. He ran away with your girl, the same as to say Miss Ella Baynes. I thought you might like to know, so I rode out to impart the information."

"I am much obliged, Jim," said Sam, taking the chewed twig from his mouth. "Yes, I'm glad you rode out. Yes, I'm right glad."

"Well, I'll be ridin' back, I reckon. That boy I left in the feed store don't know lay from oats. He shot Lester in the back."

"Shot him in the back?" "Yes, while he was hitchin' his hoss."

"And you say?" "Yes, Sam. Everybody seen 'em drive away together in a buckboard, with a big bundle, like clothes, tied up in the back of it. He was drivin' the team he brought over with him from Muskegee. They'll be hard to overtake right away."

"And which?" "I was gone on to tell you. They left on the Culture road. But there's no tellin' which forks they'll take—you know that."

"You don't want no assistance, do you might say?" "Not any, thanks." "I didn't think you would. Well, so long!" Sam took out and opened a bone handled pocketknife and scraped a dried piece of mud from his left boot. I thought at first he was going to swear a vendetta on the blade of it or recite "The Gypsy's Curse." The few feuds I had ever seen or read about usually opened that way. This one seemed to be presented with a new treatment. Thus offered on the stage it would have been hissed off.

"I wonder," said Sam, with a profoundly thoughtful expression, "if the cook has any cold beans left over?" He called Wash, the negro cook, and, finding that he had some, ordered him to heat up the pot and make some strong coffee. Then we went into Sam's private room, where he slept and kept his armory, dogs and the saddles of his favorite mounts. He took three or four six-shooters out of a bookcase and began to look them over, whistling "The Cowboy's Lament" abstractly. Afterward he ordered the two best horses on the ranch saddled and tied to the hitching post.

Now, in the feud business in all sections of the country I have observed that in one particular there is a delicate but strict etiquette belonging. You must not mention the word or refer to the subject in the presence of a feudist. It would be more reprehensible than commenting upon the mole on the chin of your rich aunt.

It yet lacked two hours to supper time, but in twenty minutes Sam and I were plunging deep into the reheated beans, hot coffee and cold beef. "Nothing like a good meal before a long ride," said Sam. "Eat hearty." I had a sudden suspicion.

"Why did you have two horses saddled?" I asked. "One two—one, two," said Sam. "You can count, can't you?" His mathematics carried with it a momentary quail and a lesson. The thought had not occurred to him that



He Pumped Six Bullets Into the Body That the Brown Dress Covered.

the thought could possibly occur to me not to ride at his side on that red road to revenge and justice. It was the higher calculus. I was booked for the trail. I began to eat more beans.

In an hour we set forth on a steady gallop eastward. Our horses were King-tucky bred, strengthened by the mesquite grass of the west.

I knew that Ben Tatum's card to play was slight-flight until he came within the safer territory of his own henchmen and supporters. He knew that the man pursuing him would follow the trail to any end where it might lead.

During the ride Sam talked of the prospect for rain, of the price of beef, and of the musical glasses. You would have thought he had never had a brother or a sweetheart or an enemy on earth. There are some subjects too big even for the words in the "Unabridged." Knowing this phase of the feud code, but not having practiced it sufficiently I overdid the thing by telling some slightly funny anecdotes. Sam laughed at exactly the right place—laughed with his mouth. When I caught sight of his mouth I wished I had been blessed with enough sense of humor to have suppressed those anecdotes.

Our first sight of them we had in Guthrie. Tired and hungry, we stumbled, unwashed, into a little yellow pine hotel and sat at a table. In the opposite corner we saw the fugitives. They were bent upon their meal, but looked around at times uneasily.

The girl was dressed in brown—one of these smooth, half shiny, silky looking affairs with lace collar and cuffs and what I believe they call an accordion plaited skirt. She wore a thick brown veil down to her nose and a broad brimmed straw hat with some kind of feathers adorning it. The man wore plain, dark clothes, and his hair was trimmed very short. He was such a man as you might see anywhere.

There they were—the murderer and the woman he had stolen. There were—the rightful avenger, according to the code, and the superannuated who writes these words.

"What are you waiting for, Sam?" I said in a whisper. "Let him have it now!"

Sam gave a melancholy sigh. "You don't understand, but he does," he said. "He knows, Mr. Tenderfoot, there's a rule out here among white men in the Nation that you can't shoot a man when he's with a woman. I never knew it to be broke yet. You can't do it. You've got to get him in a gang of men or by himself. That's why. He knows it too. We all know so that's Mr. Ben Tatum! One of the 'pretty men' I'll cut him out of the herd before they leave the hotel!"

After supper the flying pair disappeared quickly. Although Sam haunted lobby and stairway and halls half the night, in some mysterious way the fugitives eluded him, and in the morning the veiled lady in the brown dress with the accordion plaited skirt and the dapper young man with the close cropped hair, and the buckboard with the prancing nags were gone.

It is a monotonous story, that of the ride, so it shall be curtailed. Once again we overtook them on a road. We were about fifty yards behind. They turned in the buckboard and looked at us, then drove on without whipping up their horses. Their safety no longer lay in speed. Ben Tatum knew. He knew that the only rock of safety left to him was the code.

So you may perceive that women, on occasions, may postpone instead of precipitating conflict between man and man. But not willingly or consciously. She is oblivious of codes.

Five miles farther we came upon the future great western city of Chandler. The horses of pursuers and pursued were starved and weary. There was one hotel that offered danger to man and entertainment to beast; so the four of us met again in the dining room at the ringing of a bell so resonant and large that it had cracked the welkin long ago. The dining room was not as large as the one at Guthrie.

Just as we were eating apple pie—how Ben Davises and tragedy impinge upon each other—I noticed Sam looking with keen interest at our quarry where they were seated at a table across the room. The girl still wore the brown dress with lace collar and cuffs and the veil drawn down to her nose. The man bent over his plate, with his close cropped head held low.

"There's a code," I heard Sam say, either to me or to himself, "that won't let you shoot a man in the company of a woman; but, by thunder, there ain't one to keep you from killing a woman in the company of a man!"

And quicker than my mind could follow his argument he whipped an automatic from under his left arm and pumped six bullets into the body that the brown dress covered—the brown dress with the lace collar and cuffs and the accordion plaited skirt.

The young person in the dark sack suit, from whose head and from whose life a woman's glory had been clipped, laid her head on her arms stretched upon the table, while people came running to raise Ben Tatum from the floor in his feminine masquerade that had given Sam the opportunity to set aside, technically, the obligations of the code.

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CHICHESTER'S PILLS THE DIAMOND BRAND... SANTAL MIDY CATARRH of the BLADDER... 24 HOURS... SANTAL MIDY

Six Bravest of New York's Finest To Be Decorated Today

New York, May 6.—The annual parade of the Police Department and the presentation of medals for valor will take place here today. It will be led by Commissioner Woods and reviewed by Mayor Mitchell.

Six additions to the medal men of the department will be made, Mayor Mitchell pinning the coveted insignia on the coats of five patrolmen and a sergeant.

The department medal of honor goes to Policeman John A. McCarran, who captured a burglar at the corner of Bowery and Houston street.

The policeman was wounded three times, but, finally making out the form of the man in a dark hall, opened fire. The man surrendered.

Patrolman John C. Caspers will get the Rhineland medal for an attempt to arrest "Andy" Lewis, cocaine peddler. Unarmed, Caspers pursued Lewis after he had been wounded twice by the fugitive. He failed to make an arrest because his wounded leg became paralyzed.

Sergeant Alexander C. Anderson will get the Isaac Bell medal for rescuing August Nelson from the icy waters of the East River, December 27, 1915.

The Peter F. Meyer medal will go to Policeman Franklin S. Traver for a similar rescue of William Williams, a boatman's mate of the U. S. S. Wasp. The rescued man died of pneumonia.

The medal of the Automobile club of America will be awarded to Policeman Edward E. Doyle, for valorous conduct following the explosion of an ammonia plant. He entered the building after he had been warned that another explosion was imminent, and although badly hurt when the explosion occurred went back for a man he had seen lying unconscious in the engine room.

Policeman George Hagerly will get the Brooklyn Citizens' medal for the capture of a man who had mortally injured another in Hicks street, Brooklyn. He pursued the man, who was brandishing a revolver, and when the fugitive hid in a hallway and fired through the only door leading to it, Hagerly forced the door, and captured the slayer.

CHARGE OF THE "LIME" BRIGADE Half an inch, half an inch, Half an inch shorter— Whether the skirts are for Mother or daughter, Briefer the dresses grow, Fuller the ripple now, White whisking glimpses show More than they oughter.

Forward the dress parade, Is there a man dismayed? No—From the sight displayed None could be sundered. Their's not to make remark, Clergyman, clubman, clerk, Gaping from noon till dark At the Four Hundred.

Short skirts to right of them— Shorter to left of them, Shortest in front of them, Flattered and flattered— In hose of stripe and plain, Hood most exceeding glad, Sporting in spats run mad, Come the short-skirted, Flashed all their sukies there, Flashed as they turned in air— What will not women dare? (Though the exhibits show Some of them blundered.) All sorts and shapes of pegs, Broomsticks, piano legs, Here and there fairy shapes; Built just to walk on eggs, Come by the hundred—

When can their glory fade O—the world show they made, All the world wondered, Grande dame and demimonde, Shop girl and bovery belle— Four hundred—If'n—oh, well, Any old hundred. —Selected. Try Capital Journal Want Ads.

NEW SERIAL NEXT WEEK The new story, "The Lost World," by Sir A. Conan Doyle, author of the Sherlock Holmes stories, will begin next Saturday. It was announced that this serial would begin today but the copy did not reach this office in time to make good that promise. Watch for the opening chapters of "The Lost World" next Saturday.

Uncle Joe Cannon, 80 Tomorrow, Not So Rantankerous as He Once Was

Washington, May 6.—Tomorrow will be Uncle Joe Cannon's eightieth birthday. His political friends and foes in the house of representatives today celebrated the event with an hour of speech making filled with bouquets and no brickbats.

"Confidentially, I wish they wouldn't have this celebration," the ex-speaker admitted today. "It's too much like bringing flowers to a corpse."

"Uncle Joe" is not the extreme partisan he was of old. That's why men of all parties in the house feel so friendly toward him. Since his "come-back" he has kept out of the limelight.

Uncle Joe still harbors a deep-seated hatred of political reformers. Every time he gets a chance he hits one on the head. "I suppose," said Uncle Joe, "a reformer has his place. Sometimes I think they get pretty thick. They say their province is to fight with the Almighty; that the Almighty and one are a majority."

"I am not here to abuse them. Nearly all of them are honest, but once in a while one of them is a hypocrite."

In these days of aeroplanes and submarines, Uncle Joe is proud he gave substantial encouragement to Prof. Langley, the American, who was jeered when he tried to fly in a heavier-than-air machine. He helped him get an appropriation.

"You know the newspapers panned old Langley and called him a fool," said Cannon. "Going to fly like a bird," screamed the headlines derisively. They poked fun at me for befriending him."

"I didn't mind it. To tell the truth the newspapers have kind of pleased me. They have given me a notoriety for profanity and wickedness."

Speaker Clark, Democratic Leader Kitchin, Sherwood of Ohio, and Gillette of Massachusetts, were the speakers. Rodenberg, of Illinois, was master of ceremonies.

There is more Catarrh in this section of the country than all other diseases put together, and until the last few years was supposed to be incurable. For a great many years doctors pronounced it a local disease and prescribed local remedies, and by constantly failing to cure with local treatment, pronounced it incurable. Science has given Catarrh to be a constitutional disease, and therefore requires constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure, manufactured by F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, Ohio, is the only Constitutional cure on the market. It is taken internally. It acts directly on the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. They offer one hundred dollars for any case it fails to cure. Send for circulars and testimonials.

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Emma Goldman, Out of Prison, Will Continue Birth Control Speeches

(By United Press.) New York, May 6.—In the course of her motherhood I am still proud and glad to be a criminal," said Emma Goldman today when she had completed her 15 days and walked out of the workhouse on Blackwell's Island.

Miss Goldman was a prisoner here just 23 years ago, too. This time she went up for publicity advocating birth control.

She pleaded her own case, lost and had her choice of a \$100 fine or prison, she said. "I won't buy my way out of anything."

"I shall go right on distributing birth control propaganda," she said today.

"I teach it for the sake of joyous childhood and glorified motherhood," she said. "There are 300,000 half-starved women who need the information—what kind of children do you think theirs would be? If this is crime, I am willing to be a criminal. I have as fellow criminals the greatest men and women of the world."

SPEND MILLIONS TO PUT SOLDIERS ON FARMS



The providing of employment for returned soldiers is a question that is demanding much attention, and it has been with great satisfaction that Canadians learned that the Canadian Pacific railway is to take action in this regard.

J. S. Dennis, assistant to the president of the Canadian Pacific, makes this statement: "The decision of Lord Shaughnessy to provide farm homes for returned soldiers is a further proof of his willingness to devote his great energy and ability, and the resources of the company, to the solution of the problems facing Canada."

"The task of preparing 1,000 farms involves building 1,000 houses and 1,000 barns, constructing 1,200 miles of fence, digging 1,000 wells, breaking and cultivating 50,000 acres. The buildings will require 20,000,000 feet of lumber; preparation of the farms will entail an expenditure of \$3,500,000.

"One thousand farms will provide for an extremely small proportion of returned soldiers, and the government must adopt some general policy of providing these homes.

"The enlistment of 250,000 additional men called for by the government will double the number to be taken care of after the war. The western provinces have responded nobly to the call of the empire and already there is a shortage of labor of all kinds. In the effort to meet

Nation Wide Protest to Mark First Anniversary of Lusitania Sinking

New York, May 6.—One year ago tomorrow the Lusitania was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine, with the loss of 150 American citizens.

New York and other cities in the East and Middle West tomorrow will conduct services "of an impressive and dignified nature, somewhat in the nature of a protest," according to a statement issued by the American Rights committee.

The meeting in this city will be held in Carnegie Hall. It is not the purpose of those in charge of the exercises to turn them into an active attack upon the administration, but rather to use them as a memorial for the American dead who never have been avenged.

Schenectady and Philadelphia have already completed plans for similar services as have Chicago, Cleveland and other American cities.

"WAR BRIDES" HELP AUTHOR Cleveland, May 6.—"War brides" will enable Prof. Elroy M. Avery, who spent thirty years of his life writing a history of the United States, to publish his work.

Five years ago, after \$236,000 has been spent making seven volumes of the history, financial difficulties overtook his publishers. So publication of the five remaining volumes was held up.

Now A. W. Henn, of the National Aene Co., has agreed to put up \$60,000 and so has Utley Wedge of Philadelphia. Both men are said to have made big profits from "War brides."

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