

O. Henry Stories

X—Helping the Other Fellow.

By O. HENRY

(Copyright by Frank A. Munsey Co.) But can't think that help others help them.



THIS is the story that William Trotter told me on the beach at Agassiz Prescas while waiting for the gig of the captain of the fruit steamer Andador, which was to take me aboard. Reluctantly I was leaving the land of Always Afternoon. William was reminding me, and he favored me with a condensed oral autobiography as we sat on the sands in the shade cast by the Bodega Nacional.

As usual, I became aware that the man from Bombay had already written the story, but as he had compressed it to an eight word sentence I have become an expansionist and have quoted this phrase above with apologies to him and best regards to Terence.

"Don't you ever have a desire to go back to the land of derby hats and starched collars?" I asked him. "You seem to be a handy man and a man of action," I continued, "and I am sure I could find you a comfortable job some where in the States."

Ragged, shiftness, barefooted, a con-firmed eater of the lotos, William Trotter had pleased me much, and I hated to see him gobbled up by the tropics.

"I've no doubt you could," he said, idly splitting the bark from a section of sugar cane. "I've no doubt you could do much for me. If every man could do as much for himself as he can for others every country in the world would be holding millennium instead of centennials."

There seemed to be patulism in W. T.'s words. And then another idea came to me.

I had a brother in Chilopee Falls who owned a manufactory—cotton or sugar or AA sheetings or something in the commercial line. He was vulgarly rich, and therefore revered art. The artistic temperament of the family was monopolized by my birth. I knew that Trotter James would honor my slightest wish. I would demand from him a position in cotton or sugar or sheetings for William Trotter—some thing, say, at \$200 a month or thereabouts. I confided my proposition to William. He had pleased me much, and he was ragged.

While we were talking there was a sound of firing guns—four or five, rattling, as if by a squad. The cheerful noise came from the direction of the coast, which is a kind of make-shift barracks for the soldiers of the republic.

"Hear that?" said William Trotter. "Let me tell you about it."

"A year ago I landed on this coast with one solitary dollar. I have the same sum in my pocket today. I was second cook on a tramp frigate, and they marooned me here early one morning because I refused to accept benefit of clergy just because I politized the face of the first mate with a cheese omelet at dinner. The fellow had kicked because I'd put heroserdish in it instead of chish."

"When they threw me out of the yawl into three feet of surf I waded ashore and sat down under a palm tree. By and by a fine looking white man with a red face and white clothes, gentled as possible, but somewhat under the influence, came and sat down beside me."

"I had noticed there was a kind of 'village' back of the beach, and enough scenery to outfit a dozen moving picture shows. But I thought, of course, it was a cannibal suburb, and I was wondering whether I was to be served with carrots or mushrooms. And, as I say, this dressed up man sits beside me, and we become friends in the space of a minute or two. For an hour we talked, and he told me all about it."

"It seems that he was a man of parts, conscientiousness and plausibility, besides being educated and a wreck to his appetites. He told me all about it. Colleges had turned him out and distilleries had taken him in. Did I tell you his name? It was Cliff-ford Wainwright. I didn't exactly catch the cause of his being cast away on that particular stretch of South America, but I reckon it was his own business. I asked him if he'd ever been second cook on a tramp frigate, and he said no; so that concluded my line of surmises. But he talked like the encyclopedia from 'A—Berlin' to 'Zyria.' And he carried a watch—a silver arrangement with works, and up to date within twenty-four hours, anyhow."

"I'm pleased to have met you," says Wainwright. "I'm a devotee to the great joss Boozie, but my ruminating facilities are unprepared," says he, or words to that effect. "And I hate," says he, "to see fools trying to run the world."

"I never touch a drop," says I, "and there are many kinds of fools, and the world runs on its own apex, according to science, with no meddling from me."

"I was referring," says he, "to the president of this republic. His country is in a desperate condition. Its treasury is empty, it's on the verge of war with Nicaragua, and if it wasn't for the hot weather the people would be starting revolutions in every town. Here is a nation," goes on Wainwright, "on the brink of destruction. A man of intelligence could rescue it from its impending doom in one day by issuing the necessary edicts and orders. President Gomez knows nothing of statesmanship or policy. Do you know Adam Smith?"

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"So Wainwright bolts some more with indignation at the insensibility of people who are not corpulent to fill public positions, and then he tells me he is going out to the president's summer palace, which is four miles from Agass Prescas, to instruct him in the art of running steam heated republics."

"Come along with me, Trotter," says he, "and I'll show you what brains can do."

"Anything in it?" I ask. "The satisfaction," says he, "of redeeming a country of 200,000 population from ruin back to prosperity and peace."

"Great!" says I. "I'll go with you. I'd prefer to eat a live broiled lobster just now, but give me liberty as second choice if I can't be in at the death."

"Wainwright and me permeates through the town, and he halts at a rum dispensary."

"Have you any money?" he asks. "I have," says I, fishing out my silver dollar. "I always go about with adequate sums of money."

"Then we'll drink," says Wainwright. "Not me," says I. "Not any demon rum or any of its ramifications for mine. It's one of my non-weaknesses."

"It's my failing," says he. "What's your particular soft point?" "Industry," says I promptly. "I'm hardworking, diligent, industrious and energetic."

"My dear Mr. Trotter," says he, "surely I've known you long enough to tell you you are a liar. Every man must have his own particular weakness and his own particular strength in other things. Now you will buy me a drink of rum, and we will call on President Gomez."

"Well, sir," Trotter went on, "we walks the four miles out, through a virgin conservatory of palms and ferns and other roof garden products, to the president's summer White House. It was blue and reminded you of what you see on the stage in the third act, which they describe as 'same as the first' on the programs."

"There was more than fifty people waiting outside the iron fence that surrounded the house and grounds. There was generals, agitators and desperados in diamonds and panama hats, all waiting to get an audience with the royal five card draw. And in a kind of a summer house in front of the mansion we could see a burned sienna man eating breakfast out of gold dishes and taking his time. I judged that the crowd outside had come out for their morning orders and requests and was afraid to intrude."

"But C. Wainwright wasn't. The gate was open, and he walked inside and up to the president's table as confident as a man who knows the head waiter in a fifteen cent restaurant. And I went with him because I had only 75 cents, and there was nothing else to do."

"The Gomez man rises from his chair and looks, colored man as he was, like he was about to call out for corporal of the guard, post No. 1. But Wainwright says some phrases to him in a peculiarly lubricating manner, and the first thing you know we was all three of us seated at the table, with coffee and rolls and iguana cutlets coming as fast as about ninety peons could rustle 'em."

"And then Wainwright begins to talk, but the president interrupts him."

"You Yankees," says he, polite, "assuredly take the cake for assurance. I assure you," or words to that effect. He spoke English better than you or me. 'You've had a long walk,' says he, 'but it's nicer in the cool morning to walk than to ride. May I suggest some refreshments?'" says he.

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Far more effective than Sticky Fly Catchers. Clean to handle. Sold by Druggists and Grocers everywhere.

ing a solid republic out of the wreck of one. I didn't follow his arguments with any special collection of international intelligibility, but he had Mr. Gomez's attention glued and riveted. He takes out a pencil and marks the figures and estimates and deductions. He speaks more or less disrespectfully of import and export duties and custom house receipts and taxes and treaties and budgets and concessions and such crack that politics and government require, and when he gets through the Gomez man hops up and shakes his hand and says he's saved the country and the people.

"You shall be rewarded," says the president. "Might I suggest another rum?" says Wainwright.

"Cigar for me—darker brand," says I. "Well, sir, the president sent me and Wainwright back to the town in a victoria hitched to two flea bitten selling platters—the best the country afforded."

"I found out afterward that Wainwright was a regular beach comber, the smartest man on the whole coast, but kept down by rum. I liked him."

"One day I inveigled him into a walk out a couple of miles from the village, where there was an old grass hut on the bank of a little river. While he was sitting on the grass, talking beautiful of the wisdom of the world that he had learned in books, I took hold of him easy and tied his hands and feet together with leather thongs that I had in my pocket."

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DOCTORING THE HUNS WITH THEIR OWN MEDICINE

Gas Attacks, Used First by Huns, Now Often Turned Against Them.

CARE TAKEN TO PREVENT LEAKS

Waves of the Vapor, Sent Over to Enemy Trenches, Pays Them for Ypres.

London, Aug. 5.—(Correspondence of the Associated Press)—Before the "big squeeze" began disclosed a secret of the work of his own special corps whose business it is, he says "to doctor the Germans with their own medicine."

"Behind the line," he writes, "the sun set in a blaze of glory. A glance over the parapet shows the gray mists of twilight; but 150 yards away, like a brown earth shadow among the grays, hangs the rusty barbed wire of the enemy and just beyond a white, chalky upthrust marks his front line trench."

"Connect up!" The order comes down the line from one bay of the trench to another, and the gasmen immediately get busy. The front rows of neatly piled sandbags of which each fire-step is apparently coldly built are pulled out and discarded, and the cowed heads of a row of iron cylinders. They are sunk in pits well 'bagged up' to protect them from shrapnel and crack-puncture by flying fragment or ricocheting bullet. Each cylinder weighs about 130 pounds and contains sufficient compressed gas, if used without waste, to put an entire company out of action.

On top of the cylinders lies a tangle of flexible connecting lines, four way joints, spigots, and screw-jet, and upon these, with spanner and key, the gasmen start work. The cylinders are all connected in series, and nothing remains but to throw the jets over the top of the parapet and open the valves in order to release the deadly fumes.

Favoring Breeze Needed

"But something is required to carry the gas over to the German lines—a favoring breeze—and never did sailors scan the sky more intently than the gasmen watch their little clouds of fog."

"Time! Over the top the jet-pipes are flung, and then, simultaneously along the almost two miles of trench, there arises a sibilant hiss, as of some monstrous and venomous snake suddenly aroused from slumber. Now the gasmen are working frantically with wheel and spanner and key, and the hiss increases in shrillness and volume. Outside the parapet the green poison fog is already spreading like a blanket over No-Man's land. Carried ceaselessly forward its outer edge is rapidly approaching the German trenches, into which it will presently sink."

"No rifle or machine gun has been ordered this time, and from either line scarcely a sound is heard except the deadly hiss of the escaping fumes. The minutes pass in tense, ominous quiet."

Watch for Leckages

"Behind their masks the gasmen began to breathe more freely, and then, suddenly, on the left, 'Crash! And 'crash' again, and yet again. This time on the right, somewhere close at hand. The men crouch low over their cylinders; the explosions follow one another almost too rapidly to count, and in any case their minds are no longer fitted to count. Only the valves must be turned, and the sudden spurt of vapor which marks a leak must be checked by the application of a handful of mud, which the gas itself immediately freezes into an iron hard and impenetrable mass."

"Closing-up time! Rapidly the valves are shut down, the jet pipes withdrawn and plugged and stacked away. Feverishly the men work at bagging up their cylinders again. Imperceptibly a sergeant stalks down the ruined and battered trench, shepherding his flock towards their dug-out. He is an old time—a transfer from the infantry—and he scarcely quivers as 'shell bursts' behind a traverse he has just left. Quietly he directs two of the men to carry an unconscious case to the nearest point of the communication trench where stretcher bearers may be found."

The Effects

"In the dugout, with the shells still pounding overhead, the section's roll is called. Most of the men answer to their names. Some are answered by courages as wounded and for others no answers at all."

"But over in the German trenches hundreds of men are choking and gasping in agony for an hour before they die. They have been made to quaff their own medicine."

Children Cry FOR FLETCHER'S CASTORIA

the inconspicuous wind gauges, fixed to the edge of a trench. They must have a wind of a certain direction, and they prefer it of a certain strength. On this occasion the direction is satisfactory enough, but the breeze shows signs of weakness, and occasionally falls to a mere, almost imperceptible zephyr.

"Eleven O'clock"

"When not watching the wind, the gasmen are watching their pipes; repeatedly feeling and testing every inch of tube and joint, for none know better than they the danger of leakage of the escape of gas into their own trenches. Persist