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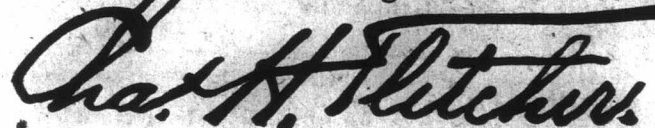
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David and Goliath

By SARAH BAXTER

Did you ever hear of the Gila monster? No? Well, the Gila looks something like a young alligator. When attacked it feigns to be dead. Its bite is frightfully poisonous. The victim lingers a long while in great agony, then dies.

There is—or rather there was—on the plains west of the Missouri river a human monster as much to be dreaded as the Gila. This was the desperado who finds his prowling grounds in new countries. When America was being occupied by a civilized people the human Gila was the renegade white. He lived with the Indians and fought with them against their enemies, including those of his own color. When the savages wished to draw the whites into an ambush they would use the renegade for the purpose, and he was not ashamed to serve them.

This human monster in another form was the terror of the plains when they were passing from lawlessness to civilization. He delighted in cruelty. There was no law in the country on which he had obtruded himself to prevent his murders or punish him there for except the revolver, and since that was his especial implement he was so skillful with it that he had every advantage.

Mark Rogers, an Indiana farmer, having a sickly wife, sold his farm and took her with their children to a region in the southwest then being taken up by white settlers. There he "squatted" and, raised what crops he could while his wife was regaining her strength. A hamlet grew up in the vicinity, consisting of four dwellings, a store, a blacksmith shop and a saloon. One day Rogers was passing through the hamlet when a man known as Texas Bill came out of the saloon firing his revolver about him as a boy celebrating the Fourth of July. Seeing Rogers, he put a bullet into his left breast. In the region of the heart he had nothing whatever against Rogers. He fired at him as he would at a tree or any other mark.

His victim fell and lay in the road till some persons took him up and carried him home. There was little or no hope that he would survive, and at his death his invalid widow and her children were left in a destitute condition. He lingered along, however, and one day his wife heard him muttering to himself that when he recovered the man who had shot him would have a chance to shoot him again or die.

This boded no good for the Rogers family. Texas Bill would have every advantage in a fight, and since it was to be expected that if Rogers recovered one of the two would die every one knew that Bill would be on the watch for his enemy in case he got out again. There were no courts to punish the crime or prevent a subsequent murder. If the husband and father did not die of his wound he would subsequently be killed.

It remained for a weak woman to solve the problem. As soon as she could be spared from attendance on her husband Mrs. Rogers took a bag and went out on the plain. When she returned it was evident that she had something in the bag, but what it was no one knew and no one cared. She took it into the cellar and left it there, locking the door. Every day after that she would go into the cellar, take the bag and go down into the hamlet, where she would spend some time answering questions as to her husband's condition, but it was noticed that she was always looking about her and had an eye especially on the saloon.

One morning while she was thus engaged Texas Bill came out of the saloon, smoking a long black cigar. His trousers were tucked in his boots, his dannel shirt was open, exposing his hairy breast, and his face was flushed with liquor. A revolver was slung to each hip, and a long knife was in his belt. Mrs. Rogers left her friends and advanced toward him.

There was something about her movement to tell the others that she had some intent concerning her husband's enemy—certainly resolve to look in her eye, a quickness in her walk. She seemed like a David advancing to attack a Goliath. Was the bag she carried a sling containing a stone?

Texas Bill stood for a moment on the porch of the saloon looking out on the desolate scene, then staggered down the steps and walked away from the group of which Mrs. Rogers had formed a part. She followed him. While doing so she raised the skirt of her dress and from about her waist uncoiled a rope. When she came to within a few yards of Bill she threw a noose in the rope over his shoulders and when it fell to his elbows gave it a sudden jerk, pinning his arms.

From this moment she moved with lightning-like rapidity, holding the lasso in her left hand, while with her right she turned the bag over on Bill's shoulders. A loathsome thing fastened itself on to his back, giving a mighty yell, he freed his arms and grasped what clung to him, but it was too late to save himself from its bite. Wrenching it off, he saw the deadly Gila. Fortunately for the woman he was so intently engaged with the monster only any heed to her or he might have served her as he had served her husband. He went howling down the road, and his cries were heard till death relieved him of his agony.

Rogers recovered, and his wife was ever after known as the woman who had beaten Texas Bill.

An Artist's Criticism.
Falgout, the sculptor, told a capital story of Henner, the great artist, who although he lived in Paris all his life never lost his Abbatian peasant accent or his country manners. But Henner was a very keen critic and had a clever way of showing his dislike of a work of art. Falgout, whose talents as a sculptor he knew all the world over, was very fond of him, but he did not paint particularly well. One day Henner was in his studio, and Falgout showed him some of his pictures.

"What do you think of this one?" asked Falgout.
"Superb!" said Henner, with his Alsatian accent. "Marvellous!"
"And this one?"
"Bridiculous!"
"And this one?"
"Suplime!"

Then the old man picked up a little book which his friend had just finished. "Ah!" he said. "Now, that's good!" "I never painted after that," said Falgout.

Wellington's Coolness.
The Duke of Wellington was one day sitting at his library table when the door opened and without any announcement in stalked a figure of singularly ill omen.

"Who are you?" asked the duke in his short and dry manner, looking up without the slightest change of countenance upon the intruder.
"I am Apollyon. I am sent here to kill you."
"Kill me? Very odd."
"I am Apollyon and must put you to death."
"Blighted to do today?"
"I am not told the day or the hour but I must do my mission."
"Very inconvenient; very busy; great many letters to write. Call again or write me word. I'll be ready for you." The duke then went on with his correspondence. The man, appalled probably by the stern, immovable old gentleman, backed out of the room and in half an hour was in an asylum.

Story of a Bunch of Keys.
After Mary, queen of Scots, succeeded in effecting her escape from the grim old fortress of Lochleven her deliverer, William Douglas, threw the keys which had brought her free down into the waters of the lake. "There they lay till the parching summer of 1805, when a boy named William Honeyman, while strolling on its banks, picked up a bunch of five keys of antique workmanship fastened by an iron ring. These the boy carried to the parish schoolmaster, who forwarded them to the Earl of Moroun, hereditary keeper of Lochleven castle, near Edinburgh, where they still remain. They are without doubt the old keys which William Douglas threw into the loch on the eventful night when the queen escaped, only to be taken again and consigned to life long captivity.

Trick of the Lemon Growers.
By an interesting yet simple method two crops of lemons are obtained in Sicily during the year, though the second is in every way inferior. The abnormal fruit is known as the Verdelli lemon and is marketed during the summer months. The Verdelli lemon, green in color, grows contemporaneously with the same trees with the ordinary or yellow lemon of commerce and is obtained by the following method: The lemon tree, which flowers in April, is kept without water from that period until July, when the roots are heavily flooded for a time. This results in a second set of blossoms, from which will come the Verdelli lemons. The ordinary lemon crop is picked in the month beginning with October, but the Verdelli lemons do not mature until the next May.

How He "Looked."
Two young men were standing in a hotel where they had gone to a free comb and the free brush. One of them seemed to think he looked rather nifty. He had on a new suit of clothes and he turned and twisted as he admired himself in the glass. Finally he could not resist the temptation to hear the spoken word of commendation.

"How do you think I look?" he asked his companion.
The other looked at him and sniffed. "You look like an accident going out somewhere to happen," was his retort.

Barcelona's Leather.
In the Barcelona district of Spain, alone there are from 10,000 to 12,000 tanned and finished sheepskins obtained daily and probably as many as well as the goatskins. Both kinds, converted into morocco leather, the goatskin being the genuine article, and the sheepskin in imitation, are used extensively in the bookbinding trade.

Big Bells.
The world's greatest bells include the king of bells, Moscow, weight, 443,732 pounds; St. Ivan's, Moscow, 127,830; Peking, 120,000; Vienna, 40,200; St. Paul's, London, 38,470; "Big Ben," Westminster, 30,354; Montreal, 28,500; and St. Peter's, Rome, 18,000.

It Can Be Done.
Lester—Say, pa, what is diplomacy? Pa—My son, diplomacy is the art of making people apologize to you after you have done them an injury.

No Barrier.
Miss Playne—You can't marry Jack because I'm engaged to him. Miss Fairre—What's that got to do with it?

Truth Is Stranger Than Fiction

By RUTH GRAHAM

When a story is ready made there is nothing to do but tell it. This tale, the incidents of which really happened, is one of the improbable kind which go to prove that truth is stranger than fiction. The only change in it from the truth is the names of the actors and the locations.

We must go back to that period when a German army was thrown into Belgium; when the French gathered their forces to defend their capital and the English threw across the channel what troops were available to assist their allies. Yet it was not there that our story begins, but in a colony of the British empire. War had not yet opened when a girl and her mother in Canada were discussing a ball dress for the former, though the girl was more interested in the expected appearance at the ball of an Englishman than in her apparel.

"I hear," said Edith Warren to her mother, "that a son of the MacDermots has come out from Scotland to see his father and mother. Maybe he will be at the Scots ball this evening."

"I think," replied her mother, "that you had better wear your pink silk to the ball, Edith. It is just the shade for your complexion."

Edith wore her pink silk to the Scots ball and met Ian MacDermott, a captain in a Scotch regiment. Whether it was the dress or Edith's beauty or her charming manners that won the captain there is no record. Certain it is that she won him, and he carried her back with him to Scotland, from her home in America on a honeymoon trip.

Scarcely had the newly wedded pair got settled in their home in Edinburgh when England declared war against Germany and threw a force across the channel into France. The honeymoon of the MacDermots had not ended before the captain bade an adieu to his bride and went off to command of his company to the front.

One night the English and Germans met in a hot fight. MacDermott's regiment was obliged to give ground before a superior force. The captain was struck by a fragment of a shell and wounded. Then the British rallied and recovered the lost ground.

When it became possible for the Red Cross and the army surgeons to rescue the wounded a surgeon, coming upon the body of Captain MacDermott, took the identification tag from it and reported him dead.

It was a sharp blow to the bride when she received news of the death of her husband. She gave up her home in Edinburgh and removed to another locality, but only temporarily, for she designed to return to her parents in America. She was not able to leave at once, but as soon as arrangements could be made she sailed from a Scotch port for New York.

There was the usual bustle upon the sailing of a steamer. Mrs. MacDermott, in deep mourning, stood on the deck looking out upon the country in which so much happiness had been expected, grieving over the wreck of her hopes.

The announcement had been made that all who were to go ashore must leave. When time had expired for this an order was given to draw in the gangplank.

At this moment an auto came dashing up on the dock, sounding signals for persons to get out of the way. Evidently some belated passenger had arrived, and the hauling in of the gangplank ceased. An officer in uniform jumped from the car and hurried aboard the ship.

A thrill shot through the breast of the woman in mourning. She saw in the newcomer her husband. Was she dreaming? Impossible! Had she become demented by the shock of passing so suddenly from a bride to a widow? Her brain was in a whirl until the officer, coming up on the deck, spied her and, running toward her, clasped her in his arms.

We left Captain MacDermott on the deck of battle, the identification tag being taken from his body. Later while the work of removing the wounded was in progress a surgeon coming upon MacDermott saw signs of life in him. The captain was removed to a field hospital. Then he was sent across the channel and placed in a regularly organized hospital for the sick and wounded of the war. There he lay for a long while unconscious.

In time Captain MacDermott was brought round and was discharged from the hospital. He made all possible haste to his home in Scotland to find that his wife had given up her home and gone elsewhere, but where she had gone he was not informed. His only means of ascertaining her location seemed to be to send a cablegram to her relatives in America. This he did and received a reply that she was about to sail from Glasgow for home.

Such is the romance of a bride and groom which if told in a story book would subject the author to a charge of inventing what was so improbable as not to be legitimate fiction. In the war between the states there were cases of soldiers reported dead who were not even wounded. But now days every soldier carries on his person his name and other information concerning him. It would seem that the old causes of error are by this eliminated. Yet Captain MacDermott's being discovered impossible permitted the tag to tell a false story which was a long while being contradicted.

MAKING MUSIC BOXES.

Great Skill and Manner Pay For the Experts of Geneva.
One big industry of Geneva, Switzerland, is the manufacture of music boxes. Thousands of men, women and children are employed in the factories one of which was visited by a young American, who thus writes about the work.

An attendant invited him to take a seat. He did so, and strains of delightful music came from the chime. He hung his hat on a rack and put his traveling staff in the stand. Music came from both rack and stand. He wrote his name in the visitors' register, and on dipping his pen in the ink the music burst forth from the inkstand.

The manager of the factory explained the process of making music boxes, a business which requires patience and nicety.

The different parts are made by men who are experts in those parts, and they do nothing else year in and year out.

The music is marked on the cylinder by a man who has served several years of apprenticeship. Another man inserts in the marked places pegs which have been filed to a uniform length. The comb or set of teeth which strikes the pegs and makes the sound is arranged by a man who does nothing else. The cylinder is then revolved to see that every peg produces a proper tone.

The most delicate work of all is the revolving of each peg. It is done by a workman who has a good ear for music. He sees that each peg is in its proper place and bent at the correct angle.

When the instrument is in its case an expert examines it to see that the time is perfect and good.

The best workmen—those who mark the cylinder and adjust the pegs—earn \$1.80 a day, after serving an apprenticeship of ten or twelve years. An ordinary workman earns \$1 a day.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

POISONOUS SNAKES.

They Are Absolutely Proof Against Their Own or Other Venoms.

Snake venom is a transparent fluid, yellowish in color and of about the consistency of human saliva. When dried it takes the form of flaky yellow crystals. In this shape or dissolved in alcohol or glycerin it will remain unaltered and will preserve its poisonous properties for an indefinite period. No satisfactory chemical analysis has ever been made of it, but it seems to be a very complex albuminous compound.

A curious discovery recently made is that the blood of venomous serpents is itself poisonous, containing as it does the principles that are concentrated in the secretion of the venom glands.

Venomous snakes are themselves absolutely venom proof. Rattlesnakes, dosed by injection with "white" quantities of their own or other venom have shown not the slightest ill effects. Another remarkable fact is that serpent venom is harmless to human beings or other animals if taken internally. The late Dr. S. Weir Mitchell found that one-fourth of a drop of rattlesnake poison would kill a pigeon if given by hypodermic injection, but a pigeon fed with six drops a day for three successive days suffered not at all in consequence.

Professor Mangill, a pioneer investigator in this line, had an assistant who boldly swallowed all the venom that could be extracted from four large vipers. No bad effects followed. The same negative result was noted by Professor Baird, at that time secretary of the Smithsonian institution, who ate the venom glands of a rattlesnake. As recently ascertained, serpent venom in such circumstances is harmless, because it cannot pass through the mucous membrane that lines the stomach, and it undergoes changes during digestion that allow it to enter the blood as an innocuous substance.—Every Week.

Trap For Quotation Experts.

If any one wants a catch question to spring on a gathering of self confessed literary sharps let him ask whence comes the quotation, "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." This is one of the six best sellers in the world of quotations, yet not one person in a hundred knows where it comes from. It is comparatively easy to guess the author, but almost impossible to find a person who can name the work.

One could build any number of parlor games around "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." Try it.—Spokane Spokesman-Review.

Newer if Not Better.

"Can't you use a less hackneyed expression than 'He liked for the tall and uncultured timber?'" asked the editor.
"Well," said the young reporter, "I might say 'He best it to the forest reserves, where the weeping willows have never had their eyelashes trimmed.'"
Boston Truth.

Rained Pitchforks.

"Did you ever see it rain pitchforks here?" asked the city man in the country.
"Sure," replied the farmer. "My neighbors gave me a pitchfork 'show' when I was married."—Yonkers Statesman.

Johnnie's Joke.

"Pa, does the sun ever rise in the west?"
"Certainly not, my son."
"How dark it must always be out there!"—Boston Transcript.

One example is worth a thousand arguments.—Gladstone.

Colonel Bunker

By M. QUAD

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"You have asked me, sub," began Colonel Bunker, "which was the strangest duel I ever fought. Of the fifteen or twenty I think that two might come under the head of strange."

Majah Blazer and I were friends and neighbors and had been for years. Not a word of discord had ever passed between us. He had a cat and I had a dog, and they were also friends.

"One morning the majah came into my office and called out:
"Colonel, tell your dawg that if he will come over he may have a look at them."

"What is it, majah?"
"Our old cat has kittens."

"You don't say! How many of them?"

"Just twenty-one, sub."

"You counted them yourself, did you?"

"Colonel, do you question my statement?"

"Not at all, major; but twenty-one kittens in a litter is certainly a wonderful thing."

"It may be, sub, and—good morning, sub!"

"And, sub, it wasn't an hour before he sent a friend to me to arrange a duel. I had seemed to doubt his veracity, and he must clear his honor. I agree with you that it was silly, but men were mighty peppy in those days. The majah's wife came and begged that I refuse the challenge, but at the same time she couldn't show me how I could do it and maintain my honor. I asked her the number of kittens and was not at all surprised to learn that the number was only four."

"The explanation was that the majah's wife had been cunning strawberies, and in speaking of it to him she gave the number of the cans as twenty-one."

"Well, sub, the choice of weapons lay with me, and I chose swords. A week before that while out for a walk I crossed the dueling ground, and I observed that close by in a fence corner was a bumblebee's nest. We were to meet at sunrise, which is a very uncomfortable hour, by the bye, and the night before I had a confidential talk with a colored brother."

"The night passed, and the morning came. I was first on the ground, and I had time to see that the colored brother was up in the part he was to play. One way word, the majah knew no more about sword play than a Laplander. I could have had him out in one minute, but I did not want that. I gave the colored brother the nod, and he stirred up the bees through the fence with a pole. They came out of the grass by the hundred, and I alone saw them in time to get away."

"But the bees, sub—the bees! Those men left behind were a sight to see when the insects got through with them. All of them had to be led home, and not one of them got out of the house for a fortnight. As for the majah, when he could get out he came to the office to say:
"Colonel, I have bad news for your dawg."

"What is it?"

"Every kitten is dead."

"Sho! That's too bad."

"And the shelf fell down and broke all the fruit jars."

"Too bad, too bad."

"And you take notice, sub, we didn't get the kittens and the jars mixed up."

At this juncture Colonel Bunker remarked that he would tell the story of another duel.

"Captain Seaton was my good friend and had been for years. One evening, as we sat on the veranda of his house, smoking our pipes and saying little, he carelessly observed:

"It's a wonder those grasshoppers can keep that noise up the way they do."

"You mean crickets, captain," I corrected.

"I mean what I mean!" he snapped.

"Well, there we were," said the colonel—"there we were. It made no difference whatever to either one of us whether it was a cricket, a grasshopper or an owl singing, but there are times when the best of men are attacked by what may be called a fool perversity. We talked for five minutes, and then I said:

"Captain, the songs of those crickets are not so unpleasant after all."

"You mean the songs of those grasshoppers, sub," he replied.

"Crickets!"

"Grasshoppers!"

"Colonel Bunker, my friend will wait on you and arrange!"

"The sooner the better, sub."

"And within an hour his friend came, and a duel was arranged for sunrise."

"You may say we were a couple of idiots, sub, but in those days a man's honor was held to be a sacred thing. If I was out walking with a gentleman, and remarked that there was a ring around the moon and he replied that he couldn't see it, honor required that I send him a challenge."

"And, sub, perhaps there was neither moon nor ring showing!"

"We were on the field and the distance was being paced off when a bull dog got after a drove of mules out at pasture, and the mules got after us. All hands were driven up trees, and as we roosted fifteen feet high one of the seconds called out:

"Gentlemen, I don't think it was either crickets or grasshoppers!"

"Tree hoppers!"

"And we descended and shook hands, and the duel was off, sub—and the duel was off!"