

THE STORY OF "HOLDING UP A TRAIN"

In "Sixes and Sevens" there appears an article entitled "Holding Up a Train." Now the facts were given to O. Henry by an old and dear friend who, in his wild avenging youth, had actually held up trains. To-day he is Mr. Al. Jennings, of Oklahoma City, Okla., a prominent attorney. He has permitted the publication of two letters O. Henry wrote him, the first outlining the story as he thought his friend Jennings ought to write it, and the second announcing that, with O. Henry's revision, the manuscript had been accepted.

From W. S. Porter to Al. Jennings, September 21st (year not given but probably 1902).

DEAR PARD:

In regard to that article — I will give you my idea of what is wanted. Say we take for a title "The Art and Humor of the Hold-up" — or something like that. I would suggest that in writing you assume a character. We have got to respect the conventions and delusions of the public to a certain extent. An article written as you would naturally write it would be regarded as a fake and an imposition. Remember that the traditions must be preserved wherever they will not interfere with the truth. Write in as simple, plain and unembellished a style as you know how. Make your sentences short. Put in as much realism and as many facts as possible. Where you want to express an opinion or comment on