

**SUSPECTED AS A SPY WAS AN ACT OF KINDNESS**

The following real story of a war is told to the Chicago Record-Herald by Lieutenant Colonel J. A. Watrous:

"I came mighty close to running my neck into a halter or being shot to death as a spy in 1863," said a soldier of a western regiment that was on duty in Virginia. "While General Hooker's headquarters were two or three miles from Fredericksburg, back of Stafford Heights, the winter of 1863 and our camp was located on Bell Plaine, on the Potomac, I frequently, as a mounted messenger, went to army headquarters.

"Between there and our camp there lived a fine old Virginia couple who had a son in the confederate army. It was convenient, both going and coming, to stop there to get a good Virginia meal, including hoe-cake or corn pone. I came to like the old people very much, and they took kindly to me. It is not necessary to mention that they had two handsome and bright daughters. They were not the attraction. It was the old people and their hoe-cake and other delicacies, if hoe-cake may be called a delicacy, and I think it can.

"There had been a great battle a few weeks before and the old couple had not heard a word from their boy Jack and naturally were greatly worried about him. The pickets between the two armies were so strong that it was next to impossible for them to get a message to Lee's army to inquire what had become of the son. The old couple asked me if I couldn't bring to bear influence with somebody at army headquarters whereby a letter could be sent to the commanding officer of Jack's company. I knew several of the officers on General Hooker's staff and didn't see why I should not make the attempt. Jack was a human being, an American soldier, and his parents had been very kind to me. I might repay some of the kindness by doing them a great favor and I decided to attempt it.

"One of the daughters wrote the letter to Jack. I put it in my inside pocket and did a whole lot of hard thinking while riding the balance of the way to General Hooker's headquarters. 'Was it the right thing to do?' I asked myself. 'Could any harm come from it? Would General Hooker, if he found it out, suspect that I was a confederate spy instead of a union soldier?' Many other thoughts came to me and nearly everyone of them worried me, by I had made a promise to the old couple I would make an honest effort to find out what had become of their boy.

"I boldly walked into the tent of a first lieutenant of regulars whom I had frequently met, and bluntly asked him if it was possible to send a letter to a soldier in General Lee's army across the Rappahannock river. He at once said it was simply out of the question; it couldn't be done, and then he began to look at me questioningly. That didn't help my nerves a little bit. I knew my face colored; it was hard to find words to reply to his rather prying questions. When he asked, 'What state do you come from?' 'When did you enlist?' 'How old are you?' 'Where were you born?' I could nearly see a file of soldiers marching up with myself sitting on a coffin, sent helter skelter to eternity, or tied about the neck by a stout rope one end hitched to the limb of a tree, beckoning me to a thrilling entertainment.

"Then the lieutenant smiled; looked much more pleasant, and said: 'I understand the case, now fully. 'Young man, you are all right. You have let some old Johnny Reb work on your feelings and you have

made an honest effort to do him a favor.'

"I smiled in return and said: 'Lieutenant, that is about the truth of it.'

"'You finish your business and go back to camp and never forget this lesson. There are officers at headquarters who, if they knew what I know, would have you under arrest in mighty short order for trying to communicate with the enemy in an unlawful way.'

"I think my horse cantered all the way back to Bell Plaine, and I couldn't sleep a wink that night. It took me a long time to get over that scare. I was in a good many hard battles before and after that, but never one of them made me half as white-livered as that regular lieutenant had done. He was a mighty nice man and a promising officer. I am going to say something that I ought not to say. When he died a year later, I really felt relieved. I knew then that there was no more danger of my being court-martialed and shot for trying to do something unsoldierly, which, when it was first suggested, I thought was a proper thing and a kindly act.

"There is something else to this story. Many years after the war I made a return visit to Virginia. I went to the old camp at Bell Plaine and rode over the same road and stopped at the little cabin where my old Virginia friends had lived. It was vacant. The old couple were dead, the girls had married and gone to other portions of the country, and Jack, the son, was in Fredericksburg. I also stopped where General Hooker's headquarters were located and recalled the lieutenant and wondered how it was possible that I had been such an infernal fool as to promise that I would try to help communicate with a soldier in a confederate regiment. My youth and inexperience were the only excuse I could give. Then I thought of the value of the lesson. I have never made a promise of any importance since then without first carefully considering what might happen should the promise be made and kept.

"Then I rode on to Fredericksburg, a famous old Virginia city that has been in existence more than 200 years; a city frequently visited by George Washington as boy and man, a city in whose cemetery his mother was buried and at whose grave Virginia women have erected a beautiful monument. Fredericksburg! opposite the Washington plantation; Fredericksburg! where two of the greatest battles of the war were fought and near which were fought the battles of the Wilderness, Chancellorsville and Spotsylvania. Mark off a position fifteen miles square from Fredericksburg on that side of the Rappahannock river and you have the locality where more men were killed and wounded than were killed and wounded in any other like amount of territory in any portion of the civilized world.

"But I am wandering from my story. I wanted to find Jack, the old confederate soldier. Inquiry helped me. The last man I asked as to his whereabouts pointed to a dray, the horse hitched to a post in the shade of a tree and the driver sitting on the board seat apparently waiting for a job.

"He was poorly clad, unshaven, hair long, form bent and his voice trembled. I told him I had known his father and had met his sisters, Mary and Lucia, but he would say little and seemed to care nothing. All I could say as I left was 'I wish you good fortune and good-by.' He didn't even answer.

"And that was the man who had caused me a world of worry and some of the meanest dreams a man ever dreamed."

**THE FUN OF RUNNING A COUNTRY WEEKLY**

We are asked to elaborate upon the fun of publishing a country paper, by which it is meant, we suppose, to point out to the reader the satisfaction experienced by the editor in the accomplishment of his chosen work, that of enlightening and entertaining his readers.

We do not know if we are able to handle this abstruse question as it deserves, having been in the limelight only a short time, we therefore approach this subject with hesitation and humility; but, nevertheless, we approach it.

If there is any fun in publishing a paper of any sort I have never found it. But I find there's lots of work—brain work and muscle work—work that will cause the goose grease of subcutaneous origin to ooze forth from the pores of the pencil shaver's skin until it covers his whole anatomy, leaving in its wake, if not death and destruction, then dirt and despondency, clear to the tips of his fingers and feet.

By the word editor I mean a man who thinks, not an automaton, or a parrot, nor even a monkey; but a man who, like Collins' Mutton Material, has a head of his own and uses it.

To such there is a world of satisfaction in publishing a paper of any sort, and he puts his whole soul into his work.

His is the joy—not the fun—of a good work well done, and he lives and dies accordingly.

Whoever deludes himself with the thought of a soft snap in a print shop will see his disillusionment melt away before many moons, and he will wish heartily and vehemently (and continually) that he had never been born. A print shop is not an elysium for a lazy man, if there be such a place prepared for such a man, which I doubt.

From foreman to devil, from proofreader to pressman, there is work, work, work—nothing but work—work and discrimination, good judgment. Work to select that which he should print to please and to instruct. Work to eliminate that which would give needless offense or do injustice; and thought and work to say that which must be said in such a manner as to make it understood without being misunderstood by any one.

We said there is no fun in running a country weekly, but we will take that back. There is. For example, there's the fun of learning to set type; the fun of learning to know b from d, and q from p; the fun of correcting typographical errors and reading writing that looks like chicken tracks and spelling like Josh Billings'es.

All this is very funny to a man who has no sense of humor or appreciation of the ridiculous; but not otherwise.

To the editor (not the victor) belongs the spoils, or, rather, the spoiling (or making and unmaking), of statesmen, constitutions, institutions and laws. And herein is the real fun, that is to say, the real enjoyment of running a paper—the pleasure and consciousness of doing good unto your fellows and thereby leaving the world better and wiser and happier for your having lived in it.—Rockville Tribune.

**A Trusty Sword**

Brown, an elderly gentleman, was entertaining some friends one night, and during the evening some of the guests paused to admire a particular room where arms of various kinds decorated the walls.

"Speaking of this sword," said Brown, as he tenderly took the carrying tool from the wall, "I never will

forget the day I drew it the first time."

"I thought that blade had a history," remarked a guest, eagerly. "Where did you draw it, Mr. Brown?"

"At a 25-cent raffle," was the happy rejoinder of Mr. Brown.—Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph.

**There are Telephone Poles**

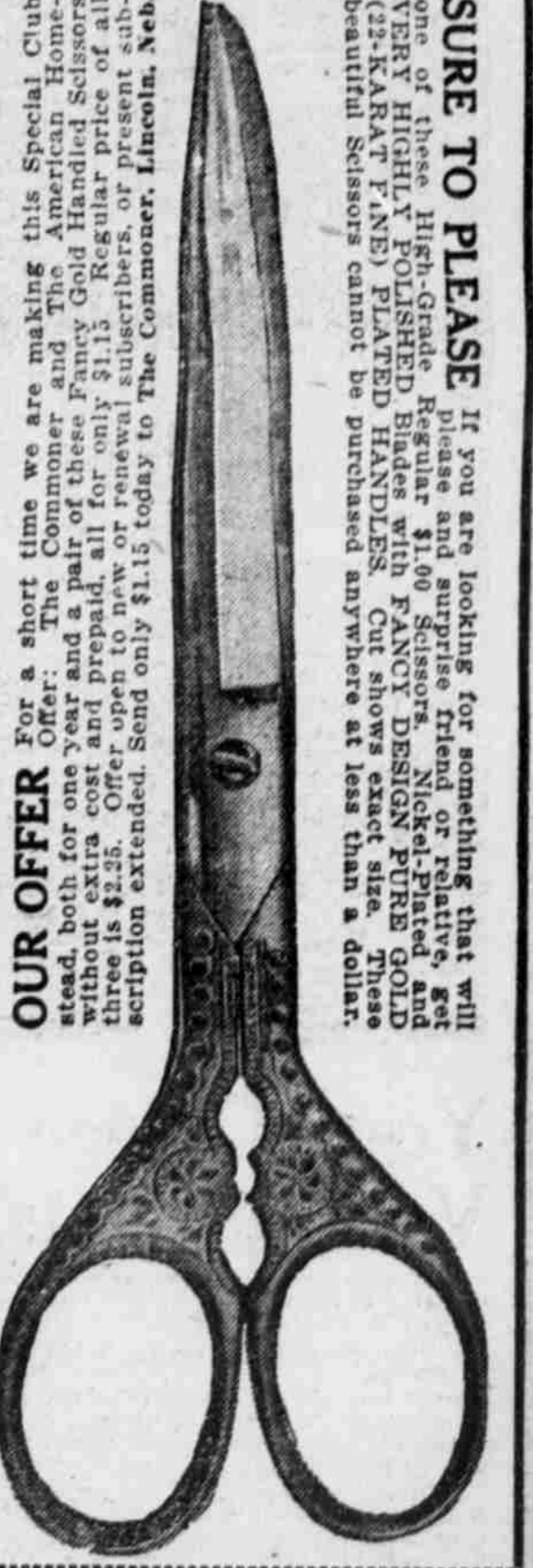
Trying out a new car on a country road, the demonstrator stopped to pick up an old farmer who looked as if he might like a ride and who admitted that it was his first experience in an automobile.

The machine was hitting a pretty good clip when it skidded on a soft spot and ran into a tree. Nobody was hurt, but as the ruralite picked himself up he said to the motorist:

"Well, that was goin' some. But say, mister, there's one thing I'd like to ask ye. How de ye stop one of these here contraptions where there ain't no trees?"—The Continent.

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