

# Leaders of a Notorious Family Feud



GROUP OF THE M'COYS—RANDOLPH M'COY, LEADER, ON THE RIGHT.



"DEVIL ANSE" HATFIELD NEAR HIS CASTLE.



SOME OF THE HATFIELDS—PREACHER HATFIELD IN CENTER.

(Copyright, 1902, by Clifford Smythe.)  
**P**IKEVILLE, Ky., April 4.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—When civilization took up its westward march a century ago, it skipped a strip of country on the border line between West Virginia and Kentucky. The hardy mountaineers then living there were descendants of some of the best Virginia families, who forgot in the transplanting to establish their homes the schools and churches their forefathers had considered all important. That is why we have today a feudal America in the heart of an educated and progressive country—a region which has not changed materially save for the gradual degeneration of its inhabitants since its first settlement of the whites.

One day—now twenty years past—two neighbors quarrelled over some pigs; three members of the family shot one of the other, and that day began a feud which has not yet ended. Dozens of detectives and total strangers who have attempted to stop the warfare have lost their lives here, and when the writer proposed taking a trip to see "Devil Anse," the head of the Hatfields, in his Island castle, all his friends united in protest against such a venture.

As for penetrating on foot and alone the wilderness of Island Creek where this redoubtable family has its stronghold, such a trip, I was warned repeatedly, could end in nothing but disaster and I was urged not to attempt it. Being a stranger, the Hatfields would take me for a detective and, like some other who had similarly ventured, I would mysteriously disappear. Other considerations, however, rendered the undertaking imperative and so I set out, accompanied by my dog, a large bloodhound, to explore the notorious little stream to its source, eighteen miles back in the mountains.

## Traveling in Bed of Stream.

Traveling afoot in a creek might seem unnatural in any section outside of West Virginia. But in the southern part of this state, all roads are creeks, the road-builder having found it simpler to utilize the water ways provided by nature rather than cut roads through the mountains.

Island Creek may bear some semblance to a roadway in summer, but I ascended it shortly after a flood in early spring and for three-fourths of the distance I was compelled to wade up stream, the water at times reaching the tops of my waist-high rubber boots. Here and there are a few scattered log houses, and a picturesque mountaineer, with a muttered "howdy," occasionally slouches along through the water on some long suffering horse. No signs of civilization or wealth are seen except as they are suggested in the rich seams of coal that crop out here and there

and the pine timber that covers the sides and tops of the hills.

At the end of fourteen miles I reached a primitive grist mill turned by the waters of the creek. It was an indication that Island Castle, the home of "Devil Anse," was not far off. The mill is not much to boast of, certainly. Every timber in it bears the rude mark of the mountaineer's axe, the only implement, apparently, that was used in throwing together this little jumble of logs and planks with their serene contempt for the refinements of lathe and plane.

Through the open spaces between the boards a boy could be seen hovering about the hopper, where a thin stream of meal answered to the noisy lumbering of the wheel plunging about in the icy waters below. It was a pleasing idyl to stumble upon after a day of hard travel, and I stood in the water looking at it with unconcealed satisfaction. Presently, from right over my head it seemed, came the challenge of a rough, hearty voice:

"I want that dawg!"  
 I looked up and shall never forget the figure standing on the cliff above me. It was a man of middle age, dressed in an old hunter's coat, with a seaman's oilskin cap on his head, a double-headed axe on his shoulder, and a gun slung under his arm. But the large, piercing eyes, even at that distance, and the tangle of brown-black beard and hair were what riveted my attention and proclaimed the identity of the man. There could be no mistake, it was "Devil Anse" Hatfield, the man of many murders and a lifelong feud. His sudden greeting left no opportunity to introduce myself. So I met his demand for my dog in kind.

## Calling "Devil Anse's" Bluff.

"You can't have him, Mr. Hatfield, but I want you. I have come all the way from Logan to see you."

The silence that followed this was far from comfortable. The old man never moved a muscle, while those terrible, fascinating eyes of his seemed to be "eating out the very heart of my mystery." "Devil Anse" is, of course, perpetually on the watch for detectives, and my reply startled him. It took some little time to gain his confidence after this. However, I had letters from two of his personal friends, each an ex-governor of West Virginia, and a show of these finally prevailed on him to come down and meet me. After I had read him the letters, his keen, hawk-like eyes never leaving mine during the operation, he expressed great satisfaction, greeted me most cordially, and, shouldering a bag of meal that his remarkable mill had just ground, led the way to Island Castle.

The latter is a large plain structure, scantily furnished and filled with a bundle of fierce dogs and children besides an arsenal of guns, knives and hunting para-

phernalia. It is a desolate structure, little meriting its title of "castle," except for the fact that it is the home and hiding place of the most notorious man in West Virginia, whom Kentucky has been seeking vainly for the past twenty years. I spent two days in this strange "castle," listening to the old man's yarns and marveling at the frankness with which he talked of the bloody feud he had inaugurated and that had come near plunging two states into war with each other. No one could be more courteous and affable, in his rude, mountain fashion, than "Devil Anse," and, despite the dark cloud of crime that overhangs his horizon, it would be difficult to avoid liking him.

## Evolution of the Feud.

Before the feud started "Devil Anse" was a well-to-do resident of southern West Virginia. He was a prosperous trader on the Kentucky border and the owner of some 5,000 acres of land. Today he is forced to hide in the woods, supporting himself and his large family by bear hunting and bee raising, together with a little farming in summer. The best part of his land has long ago disappeared and he estimates that \$50,000 would hardly cover what he has lost in lawsuits and sacrifice of property since the feud started.

It must always be difficult for an outsider to get a rational idea of the story of the feud except in the vaguest way. First, there were a couple of hogs, then a woman, then an election, a quarrel and a murder. By this time the feud, with its growing list of bloodthirsty killings and implacable revenge, was fairly launched.

After the first murder, that of Ellison Hatfield, by three McCoy's twenty years ago, the two families organized themselves into armed bands that were under oath to exterminate each other, the Hatfields making raids for this purpose into Kentucky, the McCoy's into West Virginia. From the beginning the two states have taken sides in the trouble, each successive governor of West Virginia refusing to hand over the Hatfields to the Kentucky authorities, while the McCoy's have found like protection at the hands of the Kentucky governors.

Thus, when any member of either of the warring factions is brought to justice it must be through the efforts of some private detective, working for a reward and kidnaping his victim and bringing him into the state where the indictment against him is drawn. There has been no dearth of detectives engaged in this occupation, and despite their efforts fresh murders are every now and then committed. But the original feud is slowly dying out.

"I've been in many a tight corner and just skinned through, I don't know how," old Anse said to me. "I've fit a good many people and would do the same tomorrow if need be. I've been abusin' around a mighty spell, and all I want now is to curl

up and die when the natural time comes without no man's help to send me off, neither."

## "Devil Anse" Tired of Feud.

As I was leaving Island Castle the next day the old bear hunter took me into his room, and, at the bedside of his wife, who was "jest a bit dauncy" (ill) he informed me, made a solemn request.

"Stranger," he said, "there's no telling when you'll see this ugly face again, but I want you to do old Anse a favor before you clean forget 'im, jest for the sake of the b'ar meat and honey we've et together, and for the old 'oman lying here.

"I want you to go to ole Ran'nie McCoy over in Kaintuck and tell him that I say this here feud is no use to neither of us no more.

"We've fit a powerful spell and lost a sight of kin and money and none of us is the better for it. Tell him I say let's quit!"

"Both of us kaint dodder along here much longer and while we air here we mount as well have peace between us."

Mrs. Hatfield, the mother of thirteen Hatfields, most of whom fought in the feud, acceded the old man's request, and as I was on my way to Pikeville, Ky., where Randolph McCoy lives, I readily assumed the responsibility of the strange message. It would be a benefit to both states if these two families could become reconciled and the bloody feud forgotten. Its continuance has been a great detriment to the counties involved, delaying their development and deterring strangers, oftentimes, from ever traveling through them.

But I found a very different sentiment prevailing with the McCoy's in Kentucky. Trouble has undermined the mentality of old Randolph. Mention of the feud excites him and his pathetic and impotent anger at any discussion involving the name of his ancient enemies compels one speedily to drop the subject.

It was, therefore, to his son, Jim McCoy, that I delivered Anse Hatfield's message. In all matters of business or family Jim McCoy stands in his father's place. He is an excellent specimen of the strong, hardy mountaineer, a man universally liked in Pike county, Kentucky, where for years he has been deputy sheriff. He has ten children of his own and his genial, hearty manner seemed a favorable augury for the peaceful settlement of this ancient feud. But as soon as he heard Anse Hatfield's message every token of cordiality vanished. His expression hardened, the lines on his face grew tense, his words were slowly and quietly uttered, but there was no gainsaying their decisiveness.

"You can tell Mr. Hatfield," he said, "that so long as I live there will be no compromise between us. He and his have shot down my kin, and I have made it my duty never to forgive them. There is no

more to say. I have my duty to the dead. Let the law do its part. I have made myself a poor man in order to bring these murderers to justice. Not until every Hatfield who has injured a McCoy has been punished will I be satisfied. That is my message to Devil Anse."

Those who know the man say that Jim McCoy will never alter his purpose, and that not in this generation at least will the final chapter be written to the Hatfield-McCoy feud. It is a strange commentary on our boast of progress in these United States that this border land must continue to bear so unsavory a reputation that few strangers dare to venture into it.

## Pointed Paragraphs

Chicago News: Many a man frames his excuse in guilt.

The last shall be first—when a woman picks up a novel.

Genius is the ability to get other people to carry out your ideas.

It is said that liquor improves with age, but some men don't care to wait.

Although times are supposed to be good, geologists report collections hard.

Poverty has killed its thousands and wealth has slain its tens of thousands.

It costs the average young man a lot of money to trot on the course of true love.

Many a man's success is due to his pluck. He plucks nearly everything there is in sight.

We often hear of the sweet simplicity of childhood, yet every mother considers her baby cunning.

Anything that is mighty enough to prevail is mighty enough to set itself up as the truth anyway.

Many a man can trace his ruin to his enemies and many another man could doubtless trace the origin of his downfall to his pretended friends.

It is said that the women of Egypt stained their cheeks with alcohol 1,000 years ago. It is now used as a nose tincture by some men in this country.

## The Road to Fortune

Washington Star: "There's a mint of money in it!" exclaimed the man with tousled hair and restless eyes; "a mint of money!"

"Got another idea?" asked the investor.

"Yes, sir; and it can't lose! It's a gam!"

"How is it played?"

"Oh, I haven't got down to details yet. Any kind of a simple pastime will do. All that's necessary is to fix up some sort of a game with a simple outfit and call it 'roodledydo' or 'bill-bedum' or some other fool name, and then sit down and wait for society to go crazy over it!"

# Getting Ready for April Showers at the Farnam School



GROUP OF WILLING WORKERS—Photo by a Staff Artist.



AN INDIVIDUAL HUSTLER—Photo by a Staff Artist.



PREPARING AND SEEDING THE BEDS—Photo by a Staff Artist.