

# Side Lights on Life in the Feud Land



A CEMETERY IN FEUD LAND.

(Copyright, 1903, by Arthur Morris.)

**F**IFTY MEN were killed in Kentucky's feud country last year by mountaineers who are brave enough when it comes to facing bullets in the open or in ambush, but who incontinently turn tail and streak along rocky trails whenever a man with a camera comes along.

Consider the typical case of "General" Ben Butler Souders and Thomas Jefferson Henderson, old and bitter rivals in the Bell county feud that has cost thirty lives to date. Putting aside their hatred for the time being, they had met on the banks of "Yaller" creek, within sight of the notorious Quarter House, and had just consummated the sale of a brindle cow to their mutual satisfaction, when a camera man strolled along. The "general" was the first to spy the black-boxed instrument, and the instant he did so that instant he stood not on the order of his charging full speed down the mountain side. Thomas Jefferson stood his ground until, a few moments later, he became acquainted with the cause of his old enemy's precipitate flight, and then, he, too, took to his heels in the direction marked out by the "general."

Only the latter's venerable father, 'Squire Souders, stayed to face the camera.

"Yer see," ingeniously explained the 'squire, "th' general is right superstitious about them plecter-drawin' boxes. The general hev fit some day an' time an' he ain't lookin' fer no trouble no more. They ain't a better man nor he be, an' if he's had killin' ter do, hit were bekeze they warnt no one else in Yaller creek good an' hefty enough ter do hit on'y him."

Only after an hour's persuasion and detailed explanation of the working of the "plecter-drawin' box" would the 'squire consent to be photographed, and it required all of two hours' diplomatic eloquence to induce Thomas Jefferson Henderson the next day to pose before the camera. Praise of the picturesqueness of his dilapidated shanty and the beauty of his age-withered mother, sitting in the doorway churning, finally had the desired effect.

"Wall, I reckon," said Thomas, "if you-all is agoin' ter make a drawin' o' th' old shack, hit 'pears I oughter be in hit; but, dern it all, I'd rather hev a gun pintin' at me."

The only leader in all the feud country who showed no fear or backwardness of the camera was Anse Hatfield. The possible commercial value to him of his likeness gave him courage to pose.

"You-all kin draw my plecter," he said, "an' atter hit's drawn, you-all kin write a history in a book about hit, an' then I'll tell you what we-all kin do. We kin take these hyah dawgs, an' this hyah gun, an' th' plecter 'at you-all 'ill draw,

an' th' book, an' we kin show eve'ywhere in th' kentry, an' make a sight o' money. They's money on these hyah feuds, even if they is worry an' divilint. Why, I kin sell th' hide o' a b'ar fer \$10 more nor hits worth jest bekeze hit were killed by ole Devil Anse. An' they ain't a tooth in th'e jaws o' th' varmint 'at I kain't sell fer \$1 a tooth fer th' same reason."

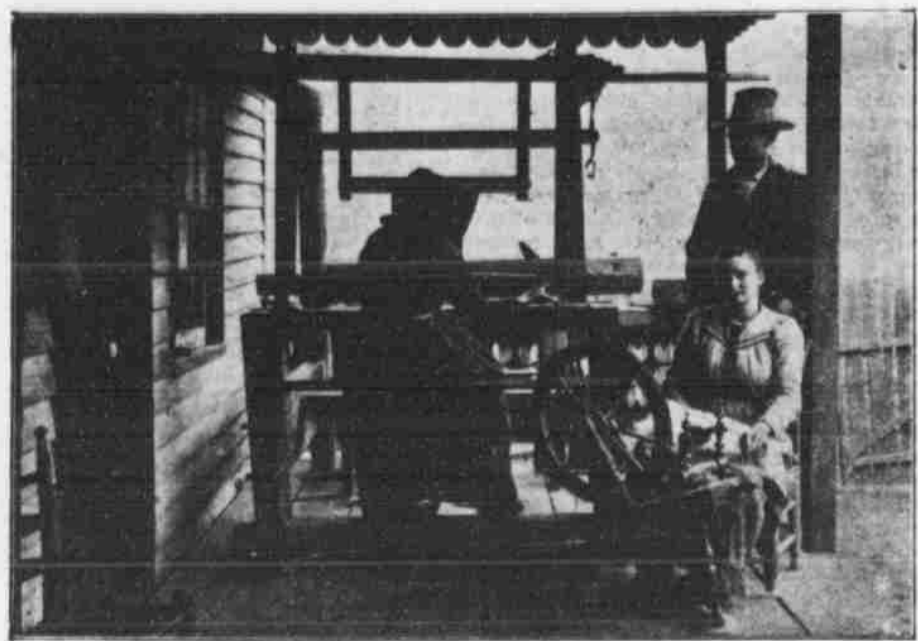
These same camera-shy dare-devils of the mountains take particular delight in having their families and their cemeteries pictured. They will go to no end of trouble to induce "th' ol' woman" and "th' gals" to pose by their spinning wheels, which are still universally used in this region, and do anything to help in "th' drawin' o' th' wimmen folk."

The typical feud land cemetery looks like nothing so much as a deserted village of dollhouse proportions. The dead—the majority of whom have fallen in feuds—are placed in little frame shacks, about six feet wide by ten feet long, which boasts a door in one end wide enough to admit a coffin and high enough to make a six-foot mountaineer bend double when he enters to place a body inside. No fastening other than a bit of revolving wood, with a nail as a pivot, is on any door.

The active participants in the feuds are not the only people in their blood-bespattered world who have rather remarkable ideas of law and its enforcement. Even the authorities have their own peculiar ways of interpreting justice.

"If a civil citizen kills another citizen and it is clearly in self-defense, don't indict him," said a judge to a grand jury in Letcher, one of the feud counties, recently. "If a civil citizen kills an outlaw, don't indict him, no matter whether he killed in self-defense or not. If one outlaw kills another outlaw, indict him without questioning the motive for killing. In such a case it would be well to sentence the outlaw for life and so get rid of him as well as his victim. If a civil citizen takes a bag of provisions on his back and pursues an outlaw all week, and then kills him as he would wild game, don't indict him. If you want to do anything, give him a better gun and more ammunition, so that he can get the next outlaw more easily. If you do indict such a man, be sure that I will file the indictment away as soon as I reach it."

Quite as remarkable as these instructions is the fact that the records of the feud counties show that out of a total of between 300 and 400 murders occurring during the past twenty years, there has been only one official hanging. This was the execution of Ellison Mounts, in the famous Hatfield-McCoy feud. Mounts was a half-witted boy accused of complicity with the Hatfields in the burning of the McCoy homestead in Pike county. As this exploit was one of the most spectacular



A FAMILY OF FEUDISTS.



'SQUIRE SOUDERS, FATHER OF THE GENERAL IN THE BELL COUNTY FEUD

and revolting in the entire feud, the authorities bestirred themselves in the matter. But there are many who hold that Mounts was innocent, and the leader of the McCoy faction is one of them.

The average feud man thinks about the courts as does Thomas Jefferson Henderson. "Yer see," he said, "th' cohts hev four killin's agin me, an' I reckon of I keep my mouth shet they'll be less trouble. So long as th' cohts ain't talkin' any, I ain't talkin' neither."

When the courts do begin to talk, then it is that the feud country sends representatives from far and near. Court week and election day are its red-letter events, the only times in the year when there is a general outpouring of dwellers of mountain-side shacks to a common center.

The judge who presides over court generally manages to maintain the requisite amount of judicial dignity while in his shirt sleeves, and often he spends his time reading a newspaper while the tobacco-spitting jury is confused by counsel, also inveterate users of the weed, and, like the judge, minus coats.

Until an old dinner bell dissolves court for recess the mountaineer spectators emulate the jury in adorning with tobacco juice the floor of the dingy room, with its many broken window panes. Then they slouch out onto the green surrounding the seat of justice, lie around in groups, swap yarns and tobacco plugs, devour watermelons, whittle boards and sticks until the grass is

littered with countless pine slivers, and now and then look after their mules and "plugs," hitched to the court house fence in the rear.

Recess over, a court attendant sticks his head out of a second-story window, rings the bell loudly, and bawls for the witnesses in the murder case on trial to come into court.

But there is no immediate response to the official summons. The Kentucky mountaineer is nothing if not deliberate in all his movements and methods. A quarter of an hour later, one homespun-clad man after another struggles upon his feet. There is a laugh and an extra joke cracked as the fat man and principal wit and gossip of the town is hoisted from the grass by two of his satellites and waddles off on his pudgy feet. Then, in leisurely Indian file, the outdoor gathering slouchily adjourns to the ancient court house, leaving a wide trail of tobacco juice in its wake.

The courthouse of Harlan county is typical of similar structures in feud land. Twenty years ago it was besieged by one-half the town's male population, while the other half was barricaded within during one of the bitterest of the early feudal wars. Scores of men were killed in those days, and for three years the military arm of the state was unable to suppress this miniature revolution, which finally sought itself out in the mountains that cluster about and overhang the picturesque little county seat.

At that time the Howard party, as an organized feudal body, was broken up and its famous leader, Wilse Howard, fled to California. There, some say, he was hanged; others that he eluded the vigilance of his jailors and the sheriff, who performed a mock execution in his behalf, thus leaving it open to the conjecture that he may still be lurking in mountain fastnesses ready to sweep down upon his old feudal enemies.

In Harlan courthouse are still the marks of this dare-devil's prowess and that of his followers when they stormed its brick walls in the endeavor to dislodge and put to flight the town authorities. The courtroom is grimy with age, desolate and bare. Its window panes are broken and the shutters creak dolefully in the wind. And the rest of the building is in keeping with the room where many a murderer has been tried but never brought to justice.

It is an unusual election day that does not give cause for the beginning of at least three feuds. A quarrel at the polls started the famous Bell county feud, in which the massacre at the Quarter house only a year ago was a chapter. "General" Souders and Henderson, mentioned above, are the present rival chieftains of this feud. A similar cause started the trouble between the Bentleys and Rameys, the Justices and Bevins, the Hargises and Cockrills last year; while among the older feuds there is scarcely one that does not count an election day dispute among its leading motives.

## She Married Her Father's Coachman

**V**ICTORIA MOROSINI, who eloped from her father's beautiful home at Riverdale on September 9, 1884, with the family coachman, Ernest Schilling-Huelscamp, is living in retirement at Rutland, Vt., where she is known as Miss Baldwin. Apparently she has absolutely forgotten her former husband. Schilling is coachman for Dr. John Jacob Kindred of the Rivercrest sanitarium at Astoria. He does not know where Victoria is, but he loves her as fondly as ever. He cherishes the hope that she still cares for him and that some day they will be reunited for the rest of their lives.

Giovanni P. Morosini was the friend and bodyguard of Jay Gould. He had fought and suffered with Garibaldi. Son of an illustrious Venetian family, he brought to this country old-fashioned Latin ideas as to the seclusion of young girls. His daughters were allowed to have few companions of their own age. They rarely saw young men, and then only in the presence of elderly relatives.

Ernest Schilling, the family coachman,

was a tall, slender, good-natured youth, with faint red cheeks and straw-colored hair. It was his duty to take Victoria driving, to accompany her when she rode. In the summer of 1884 the Morosinis saw that he and Victoria were too fond of each other. They discharged him.

Schilling returned to the place on September 9, 1884, ostensibly to collect money from a fellow servant. Victoria ran across the lawn and kissed him. Mrs. Morosini saw and stormed. That night Victoria eloped with Ernest.

They went to Europe, but returned to New York in a few months. Ernest got a job as conductor on a Second avenue car. Victoria became a superior chorus girl in "Amorita," which was being played at the Casino. She tinkled on a mandolin, sang with a pleasant little voice and tried hard to dance gracefully. She was too big. Still she was a popular success because of her notoriety. Ernest sat in a front row and ground his teeth. Also in a front seat was a young New York rubber merchant, friend of the Morosino family.

After many efforts the merchant brought Victoria and her father together. On September 1, 1886, she vanished from New York. Ernest has never seen her since nor known her whereabouts. She has not communicated with him nor admitted her identity to any one of the hundreds of persons with whom she came in contact. The World has learned that she went to a convent in Paris, where she remained until early in 1893. From there she suddenly went to Vancouver, B. C., and took train for Rutland, Vt., where she arrived at night and was driven to the convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph, where she was taken as a boarder under the name of Miss Baldwin. She left the protecting walls of the convent seldom, and then she always wore large green glasses. But even these could not conceal her unusual beauty of features and richness of coloring. She was the source of much speculation among the Vermonters and at last a few of them learned her secret. But she would not admit when questioned that she was Victoria Morosini-Schilling.

When Mrs. G. P. Morosini died on December 3, 1893, her funeral was delayed until the fourth day so that her daughter, Victoria, might attend it. The reconciliation with her family was complete. She afterward returned to Rutland, where she remained in the convent until three years ago, when she left because of a disagreement with the mother superior. Her father again cast her off. Still known as Miss Baldwin, she has boarded ever since with a Rutland family, who live in West street, near the bridge. They are in moderate circumstances. Two prominent young men of Rutland have been devoted to "Miss Baldwin," but she has given them little encouragement.

Schilling enlisted in the United States Marine corps three weeks after his wife disappeared. When he returned at the end of his five-year term he made his home at Steinway, Astoria, where he has since remained. He is honest, sober and industrious. His nearest friends say that he is certainly shadowed by detectives, who hope to furnish evidence against him.