

COL. CRICKLEY'S HORSE.

A RACY SKETCH.

I have never been able to ascertain the origin of the quarrel between the Crickleys and the Drakes. They had lived within about a mile of each other, in Illinois, for five years, and from the first of their acquaintance there had been a mutual feeling of dislike between the two families. Then some misunderstanding about the boundary of their respective farms revealed the latent flame, and Col. Crickley having followed a fat buck all one afternoon, and wounded him, came up to him and found old Drake and his sons cutting him up! This incident added fuel to the fire, and from that time there was nothing the two families did not say to annoy each other.

One evening, Mr. Drake the elder, was returning home with his "pocket full of rocks," from Chicago, whither he had been to dispose of a load of grain. Sam Braston was with him in the wagon, and as they approached the grove which intervened between them and Mr. Drake's house, he observed to his companion—

"What a beautiful mark Colonel Crickley's old Roan is over yonder!"

"Hang it!" muttered old Drake, "so it is."

The horse was standing under some trees, about twelve rods from the road.

Involuntarily Drake stopped his team. He glanced furtively around, then with a queer smile the old hunter took up his rifle from the bottom of the waggon, and raising it to his shoulder, drew a sight on the Colonel's horse.

"Beautiful!" muttered Drake, lowering his rifle with the air of a man resisting a powerful temptation. "I could drop old Roan so easy."

"Shoot," suggested Sam Braston, who loved fun in any shape.

"No, no, 'twouldn't do," said the old hunter, glancing cautiously around him again.

"I won't tell," said Sam.

"Wal, I won't shoot this time, any way, tell or no tell. The house is too nigh. If he was fifty rods off, instead of twelve, so there'd be a bare possibility of mistaking him for a deer, I'd let fly. As it is, I'd give the Colonel five dollars for a shot."

At that moment the Colonel himself stepped from behind a big oak, not half-a-dozen paces distant, and stood before Mr. Drake.

"Well, why don't you shoot?"

The old man stammered, in some confusion, "That you, Colonel? I—I was tempted to, I declare! And as I said, I'll give a 'V' for one pull."

"Say an 'X' and it's a bargain!"

Drake felt for his rifle, and looked at old Roan.

"How much is the hoss worth?" he muttered in Sam's ear.

"About fifty."

"Gad, Colonel, I'll do it! Here's your 'X'!"

The Colonel pocketed the money, muttering: "Hanged, if I thought you'd take me up!"

With high glee the old hunter put a fresh cap on his rifle, and stood up in his waggon and drew a close sight on old Roan. Sam Braston chuckled. The Colonel put his hand before his face and chuckled too.

"Crack!" went the rifle. The hunter tore out a horrid oath, which I will not repeat. Sam was astonished. The Colonel laughed. Old Roan never stirred!

Drake stared at his rifle with a face black as Othello's.

"What's the matter, with you, hey? Fust time you ever sarked me quite such a trick, I swan!"

And Drake loaded the piece with great wrath and indignation.

"People said you'd lost your knack of shooting," observed the Colonel, in a cutting tone of satire.

"Who said so? it's a lie!" thundered Drake, "I can shoot—"

"A horse at ten rods! ha! ha!"

Drake was livid.

"Look here, Colonel, I can't stand that!" he began.

"Never mind, the horse can," sneered the Colonel. "I'll risk you."

Grinding his teeth, Drake produced another ten dollar bill.

"Here!" he growled, "I am bound to have another shot, any way."

"Crack away," cried the Colonel, pocketing the note.

Drake did crack away—with deadly aim, too—but the horse did not mind the bullet in the least. To the rage and unutterable astonishment of the hunter, old Roan looked him right in the face, as if he rather liked the fun.

"Drake," cried Sam, "you're drunk! A horse at a dozen rods—oh, my eyes!"

"Just shut your mouth, or I'll shoot you!" thundered the excited Drake. "The bullet was hollow, I'll swear. The man lies that says I can't shoot! Last week I cut off a goose's head at fifty rods, and kin dew it again. By the wars, Colonel, you can laugh, but I'll bet now thirty dollars, I can bring down old Roan at one shot!"

The wager was readily accepted. The stakes were placed in Sam's hands. Elated with the idea of winning back his two tens, and making an "X" into the bargain, Drake carefully selected a perfect ball, and even buckskin patch, and bearded his rifle. A minute later, Drake was driving through the grove, the most desperate of men. His rifle, innocent victim of his ire, lay with broken stock on the bottom of the waggon. Sam Braston was too much frightened to laugh. Meanwhile the gratified Colonel was rolling on the ground convulsed with mirth, and old Roan was standing undisturbed under the trees.

When Drake reached home, his two sons discovered his ill-humor, and the mutilated condition of his rifle-stock, hastened to arouse his spirits with a piece of news, which they were sure would make him dance with joy.

"Clear out," growled the angry old man. "I don't want to hear any news; get away, or I shall knock one of you down!"

"But, father, it's such a trick!"

"Blast you and your tricks!"

"Played off on the Colonel!"

"On the Colonel?" cried the old man, beginning to be interested; "Gad, if you've played the Colonel a trick, let's hear it."

"Well, father, Jed and I, this afternoon went out for deer—"

"Hang the deer! come to the track."

"Couldn't find any deer, thought we must shoot something; so Jed banged away at the Colonel's old Roan—shot him dead!"

"Shot old Roan!" thundered the old man—

"By the wars, Jed, did you shoot the Colonel's hoss?"

"Sold! sold!" groaned the hunter.

"And then," pursued Jake, confident the joke part of the story must please his father, "Jim and I propped the horse up, and tied his head back with a cord, and left him standing under the trees exactly as if he was alive. Ha! ha! Fancy the colonel going to catch him! ho! ho! wasn't it a joke?"

Old Drake's head fell upon his breast. He felt for his empty pocket-book, and looked at his broken rifle. Then in a rueful tone he whispered to the boys:

"It's a joke! But if you ever tell of it—or if you do, Sam Braston, I'll skin you alive!—By the wars, boys, I've been shooting at that dead horse half an hour at ten dollars a shot!"

At that moment Sam fell into the gutter. Jed dragged him out insensible. Sam had laughed himself almost to death.

LORD ELDON'S FATHER.—After the death of his first lady, he rose one morning with the whimsical resolution of marrying any one of his maids who should first appear on his ringing the bell. He rang, and the chambermaid came up, to whom he abruptly said, "Get yourself ready, and go with me to be married."—The silly girl, treating the affair as a joke, refused, and withdrew. He rang the bell a second time, when the cook maid appeared, to whom he said, "Well, my girl, I intend this day to make you my wife; go and dress yourself with the best you have, and order the coach immediately." She took him at his word, dressed herself, and, coming down stairs, was met by the silly chambermaid, who asked her where she was going? "Abroad—I have my master's leave." She had scarcely uttered these words, when her master came down and took her by the hand to the coach, which drove to St. Benet's church, where they were married.—*Lives of the Chancellors.*

ENGLISH AND AMERICAN FEMALES.—Conversing a few days since with an English gentleman, who has, during a tour through the States, been an acute observer of things, he remarked that nothing struck him so forcibly as the precocity of American females. "Your girls are all women," said he; "the miss of sixteen converses with an English woman of forty; but it does not last, I find, for your women of forty are as old as ours of fifty." There is considerable truth in the remarks, and to substantiate them he handed us the following, taken from an English paper. It may be read with profit by parents:—

"The English girl spends more than one-half of her waking hours in physical amusements, which tend to develop and invigorate and ripen the bodily powers. She rides, walks, drives, rows upon the water, runs, dances, plays, sings and jumps the rope, throws the ball, hurls the quoit, draws the bow, keeps up the shuttlecock, and all this without having it forever pressed on her mind that she is thereby wasting her time. She does this every day until it becomes a habit, which she will follow up through life. Her frame, as a necessary consequence, is larger; her muscular system better developed; her nervous system in better subordination; her strength more enduring, and the whole tone of her mind healthier. She may not know as much at the age of seventeen as the American girl—as a general thing, she does not—but the growth of her intellect has been stimulated by no hot-house culture; and, though maturity comes later, it will last proportionably longer. Eight hours each day of mental application for girls between ten and nineteen years, or ten hours each day, as is sometimes required at school, with two hours for meals, one for religious duties, the remainder for physical exercises, are enough to break down the strongest constitution.

WHY SHOULD ANY MAN SWEAR?—I can conceive of no reason why he should, but of ten reasons why he should not.

1. It is *mean*. A man of high moral standing would almost as soon steal a sheep as swear.
2. It is *vulgar*; altogether too mean for a decent man.
3. It is *cowardly*; implying a fear either of not being believed or obeyed.
4. It is *ungentlemanly*. A gentleman, according to Webster, is a *gentle man*. Well-bred—refined. Such a one will no more swear, than go into the streets to throw mud with a clod-hopper.
5. It is *indecent*; offensive to delicacy, and extremely unfit for human ears.
6. It is *foolish*. "Want of decency is want of sense."—Pope.
7. It is *abusive*. To the mind which conceives the oath, to the tongue which utters it, and to the person at whom it is aimed.
8. It is *venomous*; showing a man's heart to be a nest of vipers, and every time he swears, one of them sticks out its head.
9. It is *contemptible*; forfeiting the respect of all the wise and good.
10. It is *wicked*; violating the divine law, and provoking the displeasure of Him who will not hold him *guiltless* who takes his name in vain.—*Sailor's Magazine*

A PUFF AS IS A PUFF.—We take the following genuine puff from the Boston *Olive Branch* of the 7th inst. The Yankees must pay well for their advertisements to insure such flattering notices, but let them attempt to put some of their threats into execution and Russia Salve won't save them.

"If it should happen that war should grow out of the present trouble with England, that nation would be sure to lose their possessions on this continent, thousands of volunteers would cross the boundary line and drive John Bull away. Every Yankee has a great deal of foresight about him, and in case of trouble would always be sure to have a box of Russia Salve about him, for it cures cuts, wounds bruises, scalds, burns, bites, sores, &c."

"Can you inform me where the office of the *Ibid* is, sir?" "The office of what?" "A paper called the *Ibid*." "There is no such paper published." "No! Why down where I came from, the editors are continually taking first-rate extracts from it."

CURIOUS BILL.—The following bill for work done in repairing the ornaments of the Lutheran Church at Hamburg, is said, by a traveller, to have been presented for payment:—

- For mending the ten commandments.
- For a nose and three fingers to one of the robbers of the cross.
- For scouring and brushing Pontius Pilate.
- For gilding and painting the wings of the angel Gabriel.
- For half a breast of Mary Magdalen.
- For cleansing and painting the High Priest's maid, and adding color to her cheeks.
- For putting a new feather in the cockade of St. Peter.
- For brushing and brightening hell-fire, and providing tails and horns for two devils.
- For strengthening the chains of some of the damned.
- For beautifying and ornamenting some of the elders, and strengthening their backs on frames.
- For supplying one of the apostles.

IS IT SO?—Women make their advances as Time makes his. At twenty, when the swain appears to pay his devoirs, they exclaim, with languid indifference, "Who is he?" At thirty with a prudent look towards the ways and means, the question is, "What is he?" At forty, much anxiety manifests itself to make a hymenial selection, and the query changes itself into "Which is he?" But at fifty, the anxious expectant prepares to seize upon any prey, and exclaims, "Where is he?"

NEWSPAPER BLUNDERS.—Proof readers sometimes occasion most ludicrous mistakes in the papers. The "John Bull" relates a couple of instances in its own experience:—"About two years since, we represented Mr. Peel as having joined a party of 'fiends' in Hampshire, for the purpose of shooting 'peasants'; and only last week, in a Scotch paper, we saw it gravely stated that a 'surgeon' was taken alive in the river, and sold to the inhabitants at 6d and 10d per lb."

Mr. Editor:—Maria Matilda wants to know why General Debility was not nominated for the Presidency, he having killed more people and caused more fainting than either Scott or Pierce, and as the Generals are the *great bugs*, why was he excluded from the Convention? She pauses for a reply.

How comes it that "hatchet-shape faces" always get "hatchet-shape voices?" Show us a feminine with features like a shingle, and we'll show you a feminine who can utter words sharp enough to shave with. The more plump the visage, the more velvety are the words which flow from it.—*Yankee Blade.*

A witty lawyer once jocosely asked a boarding house keeper the following question:—"Mr. —, if a man gives you five hundred dollars to keep for him, and dies, what do you do? Do you pray for him?" "No, sir," replied Mr. —, "I pray for another like him."

Somebody lets off the following on the marriage of Mr. John Rush to Miss Sarah Canter:—"When Cupid did this maiden banter, On Hymen's course to take a brush, At first she went it with a CANTER, But now she goes it with a Rush."

In New Orleans, a young girl who serves at a coffee stand in the vegetable market of the second district, was fined five dollars for simply kissing a man! Talk of the Puritanism of New England!

Our Mrs. Partington thinks that Gen. Scott must have joined the Catholic church, for she sees by the papers that his friends are holding *mass* meetings every where.

"Have you ever broken a horse?" inquired a horse jockey.

"No, not exactly," replied Simon, "but I have broken three or four waggons."

It is calculated that East Brooklyn raises about forty waggon-loads of white-headed children to the acre—besides a considerable few of red-top.

When a Tennessee girl is slyly kissed, she puts on a frown and says, "Now, put that article right back, sir, where you stole it from!"