BAT MASTERSON

AN ADVENTURE STORY WITH A LIVE HERO

By ALFRED HENRY LEWIS.

WILLIAM BARCLAY MASTERSON was born in Iroquois county, Ill. His father was a farmer and came originally from St. Lawrence county, N. Y. His father still lives and counts himself among the Sedgewick county pioneers of Kansas, with a sunflower residence that reaches rearward half a century.

First a Kansas farm boy, Mr. Masterson—subject of this memoir—was early abroad upon the plains. What is farm land now was savage wilderness then, and those who invaded it did so with a knowledge that their hands must keep their heads. For 20 years, beginning when he was 13, Mr. Masterson lived by his own personal powers of offense and defense, and was in more or less daily peril of death from Indians or from outlaw spirits—common enough, these latter, in the West of that hour.

Just as some folk are born poets, so others are born shots, and Mr. Masterson from the first evinced a genius for firearms. With either rifle or pistol he proved himself infallible, and of all who ever pulled trigger he has wasted least lead. It was as a hunter he won his name of Bat, which descended to him, as it were, from Baptiste Brown, or Old Bat, whose fame as a mighty Nimrod was flung all across, from the Missouri River to the Spanish Peaks, and filled with admiration that generation of plainsmen which immediately preceded Mr. Masterson upon the Western stage.

For his deadly accuracy with the rifle Mr. Masterson was early employed to "do the killing" for great hunting outfits which in the '70's ransacked the country between the Arkansas and Canadian for buffaloes in the name of robes and leather. Mr. Masterson would "kill" for a dozen men to skin and cure; and the majestic character of that commerce, wherein he bore his powder-burning part, may be guessed at from the fact that in such years as 1872 more than three hundred thousand buffalo hides, to say naught of one-fourth as many robes, were shipped eastward from the single town of Dodge.

Crossing and recrossing the buffalo ranges, Mr. Masterson came naturally by a close knowledge of the country, and in a region not overstocked of water could locate every spring and stream as surely as astronomers locate stars. Thus it befell that General Miles was quick to enlist him as scout in his campaigns against the Cheyennes in '74. In truth, there were more than the Cheyennes engaged in that trouble, for those copper-colored Richards drew with them to the field the flower of the Kiowa, Comanche and Araphoe tribes.

Gun Stolen by Indians

It is to be thought that Mr. Masterson himself was in half fashion, the partial first victim of that war. The cunning Indians were apparently steeping themselves in peace, with never a notion of warpaths and paleface scalps. They were none the less sedulously and not always quietly about the collection of what rifles and pistols and cartridges they could lay red hands upon. Mr. Masterson was one day skinning a buffalo he had killed when a quintet of Cheyenne bucks rode amiably up. They belonged with old Bear Shield's band, whose home camp was on the Medicine Lodge. Mr. Masterson thought little or nothing of the five Cheyennes. They were every-day sights in his life, and the last thing he looked for was trouble. He kept on with his skinning, merely ejaculating "How!" to clear himself of any imputation of impoliteness.

Mr. Masterson's rifle was lying on the grass—a .50-caliber Sharp's buffalo gun, for which he had paid $80. One of the Cheyennes carelessly picked up the rifle as though to examine it. As he did so another reached across—Mr. Masterson was bending over the dead buffalo bull, skinning knife in hand—and whipped the six-shooter from the Masterson belt. At these maneuvers Mr. Masterson straightened up, and was just in time to receive a confusing blow over the head from his own rifle. The eight-square barrel cut a handsome gash and covered his face with blood. As the Cheyenne struck the blow he broke into excellent agency English, through which flowed a dominating element of profanity, and commanded Mr. Masterson to "dig out."

Since the Cheyenne had the muzzle of the rifle not two feet from his stomach, and those four fellow-Cheyennes evinced an eagerness to bear a helping hand, Mr. Masterson decided to "dig out." That is to say, with blood covering his face he backed away from the rifle-pointing, profane Cheyenne toward a ravine which yawned conveniently in his rear. Arriving at the brink, Mr. Masterson with hasty strategy fell into that saving canyon and was out of range in a moment.

Running along the bottom of the ravine for half a mile, Mr. Masterson reached his own buffalo camp. After a consultation with his two camp mates the whole party packed their burros and pointed their noses for Dodge, 60 miles to the north. Mr. Masterson, sore of head from the blow and sore of heart from the loss of his new rifle, was all for following the five Cheyennes and giving them battle. But his comrades, whose unvisited heads were still intact, and whose hearts had been wrung by no rifle losses, overruled him. They said, "Let's pull our freight," and they pulled it.

Attacked by Redskins

Mr. Masterson, however, was not to be consoled. That night—Christmas night it was—he rode back and ran off 40 of old Bear Shield's ponies. These brought him $1,200 in Dodge and repaired what monetary losses he had suffered, to say the least. The wounds to his head and to his honor, vide licet his boyish vanity, which those five Cheyennes had inflicted he cured later at the battle of the 'Dobe Walls.

It was in the last days of June that the fight at the 'Dobe Walls occurred. The "'Dobe Walls" consisted of two buildings, one a great outfitting store belonging to Mr. Wright, present head of the Kansas State Historical Society, and the other Mr. Hanrahan's saloon. The latter gentleman is now, I think, a member of the Idaho legislature; but at the time whereof I write he cheerfully conducted a bar and restaurant for the comfort of what buffalo hunters worked along the Canadian, 200 miles south of the last sign of civilization.

There were 14 buffalo hunters at the 'Dobe Walls that night in June. Nine—among them Mr. Masterson—slept in Mr. Hanrahan's saloon and five in Mr. Wright's store. Not one anticipated attack.

Luckily, about 8 o'clock in the morning the roof—a dirt roof—of Mr. Hanrahan's saloon fell in. The sleeping buffalo hunters were forced to turn out. This was all that saved them; otherwise the prophecy of a Comanche medicine man would have been fulfilled and the buffalo hunters knocked on the head as they slumbered.

Morning came streaking the east and found the buffalo hunters still engaged in aiding Mr. Hanrahan about the restoration of his roof. It was at this moment of morning that full 500 Indians, the picked warriors of the Kiowas, Comanches, Arapahoes and Cheyennes, swung out from the shadow of a fringe of cottonwoods that ranked the Canadian River.

In a moment every buffalo hunting man Jack of them, abandoning roof for rifle, clawed up his gun and took to a window. Mr. Masterson's window mate was Mr. Dixon, who has since—for the sentiment of the thing, perhaps—homesteaded the 160 acres which include the 'Dobe Walls and makes the same his residence.

Eighty Indians Killed

The firing instantly began, and the charging Indians had the tremendous worst of it. The Indian is in several respects defective. He is a bad shot; he won't dismount and fight on foot, and he is so much the Parthian that it's against his religion to fight in the night. Mr. Masterson and his fellow buffalo killers were, in these three particulars, the precise opposite of their enemies. They were dead shots; they preferred to fight on foot; and, as for night and day, when it came to bloodshed the two were synonymous. Daylight or dark, they transacted their wars the moment the foe was found, holding—as held a famous jurist concerning the law—fighting to be a so sacred matter that for it all places are palaces, all seasons summer." Wherefore, when those hopeful 500 savages charged, the 14 hunters tore into them blithely with their big buffalo guns, and began emptying redskin saddles at a most disheartening rate. The Indians charged fiercely three times, and the unerring Mr. Masterson and his friends corded up over 20 of them. The siege, before all was over, lasted two weeks; but the fighting, so far as the Indians were concerned, after those first three furious charges—which broke the aboriginal teeth—was but half-hearted and desultory.

To tell the whole of the battle at the 'Dobe Walls would go beyond the limits of an article such as this. The excited comments of a tame crow which, while the fight raged, flew chatteringly to and fro from Hanrahan's to Wright's and back again, would of themselves make a story; while how Mr. Masterson crossed to Wright's store in quest of cartridges for a pet rifle he possessed, and was deeply bombarded in transitu by a wounded Kiowa hiding in a clump of weeds; how a boy in Wright's died from a bullet in his lungs; how Old Man Richards walked through a hail of lead to a pump 10 rods away in the open, and while a dog was killed at his feet and his hat shot from his gray head and bullets plowed and spattered the pump platform and ground about him, drew a bucket of cool water for the dying boy; how a wild tenderfoot, one Thompson—killed afterward by Billy the Kid—persisted, in the teeth of command and the very face of slaughter, in rushing forth to rob dead Indians of their war bonnets and guns; how the lookout on Hanrahan's roof blew out his own brains instead of an Indian's; how Mr. Masterson, in the plenitude of his young conceit, leaped from a window and scalped a Comanche—he owned an unusually alluring topknot, black and glossy—under the very noses of his scandalized tribesmen; how each night the beleagured ones, to save their own noses, must bury the dead Indians and ponies; how throughout the long two weeks, when not at the windows fighting, the said beleagured ones beguiled the tedmium of their lives by profound games of draw poker; how the Comanche medicine man was luckily killed by Mr. Masterson on the first charge; how that same faultless rifle shot afterward brought down a negro bugler who had deserted the standards of Uncle Sam for those of the Cheyennes and was then sounding charge and rally as war music cheering to the aboriginal heart, and how finally, after two weeks, the cavalry came down from Dodge and raised the siege, must one and all, as battle elements, wait for their relation upon occasion more comprehensive than this. Suffice it that the Indians were beaten, with a whole battle loss—by their own story told later at the agencies—of over 80 killed, to the meager count of one slain by savage lead on the side of the buffalo hunters.

His First Gun Trouble

Once, so runs the talk, a gentleman of extensive pistol practice was testifying as a witness. "How many men have you killed?" asked the cross-examining lawyer.

The witness seemed for the moment posed, almost puzzled. At last, as one seeking exact light, he inquired:

"You don't mean Mexicans and Indians?"

The cross-examining lawyer explained that he intended only white men, Mexicans and Indians to be excluded. The witness then took up the count.

Excluding Mexicans and Indians, Mr. Masterson's first gun trouble was at Mobeetie, in the Texas Panhandle, the theater thereof being a dance hall called the Lady Gay. Sergeant King, a soldier and a gambler, found fault with Mr. Masterson, and lay in prudent wait to take his life at a side door of the Lady Gay.

The evening was dark. A girl named Anna Brennan came up. The lurking King, giving some excuse, asked her to rap at the door, conjecturing that Mr. Masterson, who was just inside, would open it. The King conjecture was justified; Mr. Masterson did open it and asked the girl what was wanted. At the sound of his voice King stepped forward and, placing the muzzle of his pistol against the Masterson groin, fired King fired a second shot and accidentally killed the girl Coincident with that second shot, however, Mr. Masterson's pistol exploded and King fell shot through the heart. The girl, King and Mr. Masterson went down in a bleeding heap; the two first were buried, while to the amazement of the surgeons at Fort Eliot Mr. Masterson was back in the saddle by the end of eight weeks. So much for the recuperative powers of one who had lived healthfully and close to the ground.

Mr. Masterson's hat measures seven and three-eighths. Wise, cool, wary, he is the born captain of men. Generous to a final dollar, the poor and needy make for him like night birds for a lighthouse. To a courage that is proof he adds a genius for justice and carries honesty to the pitch of romanticism. To these virtues of mind and heart and the thews of a grizzly bear and you will have a picture of Mr. Masterson. Such he is; such he was when at the age of 22 the public elected him sheriff for Ford county, whereof the seat of justice was the stormy little city of Dodge.

As sheriff Mr. Masterson's duties carried him over 16 unorganized counties, besides the county of Ford. His more immediate responsibility, however, was the good order of Dodge and to prevent ebullient cowboys, when the autumn herds came up, from "standing" that baby hamlet "on its head." It took judgment and nerve and forbearance and military skill, but Mr. Masterson accomplished the miracle, and did it, too, at a minimum of bloodshed. In the words of a satisfied citizen and taxpayer:

"He never downed a man who didn't need it, and kept Dodge as steady as a church."

Masterson as Sheriff

Scores of lurid spirits, whose lives were forfeit by every Western rule, have been spared to live a quieter life by the forbearing Mr. Masterson. Mr. Sutton, a lawyer, and a present resident of Dodge, was out recently in the papers with a story in illustrative point. Three cowboys, moved of whisky and a taste for violence, dashed down the single street of Dodge, their six-shooters blazing like Roman candles. Most peace officers would have harvested these boys; Mr. Masterson was more leniently inclined, since thus far the young merrymakers had not succeeded in hitting anybody. Sure of its aim, Mr. Masterson's pistol barked three times. Two of the ponies fell, and Mr. Masterson dragged their riders—sprawled all abroad in the dust of the street—off to the calaboose.

The third pony lasted until he reached the south side of the Arkansas and then dropped dead. Thereupon its rider stripped off saddle and bridle, "stuck up" the incoming buckboard and compelled the driver to turn nose-about and land him at a nearest ranch, more than 40 miles away.

There was a lady aboard the buckboard who sang in the theaters. She was coming north from Mobeetie to fill a Dodge engagement. As shortening those tiresome 40 miles the dismounted cowboy—pistol in hand, eye on the buckboard driver, who might at any moment rebel—told the cantatrice that he thought she ought to sing. With that, she thought so, too; and for 40 miles she warbled Silver Threads Among the Gold and kindred melodies of concert hall vogue at the time. This boy got clear away, while the ravens and the coyotes, at their feast over his dead pony, gloried in the fatal accuracy of the Masterson guns.

As demonnstrating his huge strength, Mr. Masterson once seized a recalcitrant cowpuncher, who, seated in his saddle, was making ready to "shake up the village." The cowboy was himself as strong as whalebone and gripped his pony with legs of iron. Throwing his soul into the business, Mr. Masterson gave that adhesive cowboy such a wrench—the boy meanwhile clinging to his mount like grim death—that both pony and boy were thrown heavily to the ground.

It was not always convenient, nor even feasible, to spare the blood of the wrongdoer. The following might furnish an example in line: Mr. Kennedy rode up to the Alhambra, kept by Mr. Kelly, the then mayor, and took a shot at that publican and magistrate with his Ballard. Mr. Kennedy missed Mr. Kelly and killed a lady who had come to the Alhambra to have part in the nightly ball. Mr. Kennedy—it was 8 o'clock in the evening—on the heels of the homicide dug spurs into his pony's flanks and flew southward through the darkness. He was heading for the Canadian, 200 miles away.

Killed His Man in a Duel

Mr. Masterson saddled a fleetest horse and started cross country for the ford where the flying Mr. Kennedy must cross the Medicine Lodge. There were three or four trails, and direct pursuit in the dark was out of the question. Mr. Masterson reached the ford in the gray of the morning, bettering Mr. Kennedy's time by an hour. He hobbled his horse and threw himself in behind a convenient knoll to wait the coming of the murderous flying one. At last the latter drew near, eye scanning the ribbon of trail to the rear, pony worn and panting. No wonder, this last—70 miles at a swinging hand gallop is no mere canter.

"Hold up your hands!" cried Mr. Masterson.

Mr. Kennedy almost leaped from the saddle with the surprise of it; he wasn't looking for an enemy in front. The next moment, however, he pulled himself together and drove a bullet at Mr. Masterson from the Ballard. Mr. Masterson was quite as brisk. The report of his big buffalo gun made one report with the Ballard. Mr. Kennedy's shot went wide, while the .50-caliber bullet from the buffalo tore its fearful way into his side. As he fell an accidental yank on the Spanish bits brought the tired, broken pony with him.

Mr. Kennedy rolled a dying eye upon Mr. Masterson.

"You blankety-blank-blank!" said Mr. Kennedy; "you'd ought to have made a better shot than that!"

"Well, you blankety-blank murderer!" quoth Mr. Masterson. "I did the best I could."

Mr. Masterson's brother Ed was made marshal of Dodge, somewhat against the wish of Mr. Masterson. The latter feared that the "bad men" who came and went in Dodge would "outmanage" his brother, whose suspicions were too easily set at rest.

It fell out as Mr. Masterson had feared. Mr. Wagner, drunk and warlike, sought to enter Mr. Peacock's dance hall, questing trouble. Marshal Ed Masterson, instead of pulling his own gun as prudence would have dictated, and stopping the violent Mr. Wagner with the cold muzzle thereof, seized that truculent person by the shoulders. Instantly Mr. Wagner's six-shooter was brought to the fore. With that Marshal Ed Masterson shifted his left hand to Mr. Wagner's wrist and for a moment put that drunkard's weapon out of commission. There the two stood, the situation deadlocked.

From across the street Mr. Masterson saw events and started to his brother's aid. He was still 60 feet away when Mr. Walker, who, like Mr. Wagner, was a persons of cows, ran from the dance hall and snapped his six-shooter in Marshal Ed Masterson's face. The cartridge failed to explode. Mr. Walker was never given the chance of trying a second, for Mr. Masterson put three bullets from his Colt's .45 through him before he could hit the ground. As the dead Mr. Walker went down Mr. Wagner, still in a grapple with Marshal Ed Masterson, got his gun to bear and shot Marshal Ed Masterson in the body. The latter fell, wounded to the death, coat afire from the other's powder. Mr. Wagner fell across him, a bullet from Mr. Masterson's pistol through his brain.

And after this fashion did Mr. Masterson maintain law and order in Dodge. Many were his battles, many the wounds he wrought; and it was said that the local doctor traced half his practice to the untiring efforts of Mr. Masterson in behalf of communal peace.

Bad Men on His Trail

Once upon a time in Dodge a general war was missed by narrowest margin. Those dead worthies, Messrs. King, Kennedy, Wagner and Walker, had come, one and all, from Texas in their day, and Lone Star feeling, always clannish, seldom nicely critical, resented their taking off. It is not too much to say that ten thousand dollars might have been borrowed on Mr. Masterson's scalp in a dozen Texas towns. Scores of stark souls came north with the herds, avowing no other intention than to wipe out the hated Mr. Masterson.

Among these was Mr. Driscoll—big, violent, formidable. Mr. Driscoll was not in Dodge 10 minutes before Mr. Masterson introduced himself.

"I'll give you half an hour," said Mr. Masterson, "to put yourself the other side of the Arkansaw; and if you ever jingle a spur in lodge again I'll shoot you in two."

Mr. Driscoll crossed the "Arkansaw," and later—his laurels somewhat tarnished and not caring to return to Texas under such diminished circumstances—he journeyed down to Springer and went to work for Senator Dorsey's "Triangle-dot."

Mr. Burlison was sheriff of Colfax county, N. M., where the Dorsey ranches were, and Mr. Masterson wrote his brother officer a letter.

"Dear Burlison," said Mr. Masterson, "this man Driscoll, who has migrated to your neck of the woods, will bear watching. He's a four-flush and a bully. If he tries to start anything down your way go right at him and he'll quit."

Mr. Driscoll "started" something, Mr. Burlison went "right at him," and Mr. Driscoll "quit." Also when he "quit" he was dead.

Mr. Allison was a Texan by adoption and a friend of Mr. Driscoll. Likewise, he was lame with a clubfoot, limped when off his horse and used a Winchester for a crutch. He had slain many men, and took a quiet pride in the fact that in the teeth of local ordinances to the contrary he never took his guns off when he visited any town.

Ready for Gun Play

Mr. Allison was in Dodge when Mr. Masterson introduced himself to the offensive Mr. Driscoll. Being coldly advised, however, by Mr. Masterson, Mr. Allison was not wearing his hardware. In the day that followed the banishment of Mr. Driscoll the whisper went the Dodgian rounds that the Texas cow people, then and there in large numbers, were making war medicine and would presently "turn loose" under the leadership of Mr. Allison. With that the careful Mr. Masterson made preparations; and such berserks as Mr. Earp, Mr. Brown, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Holiday, Mr. Bassett, Mr. Short and others whose names were high and famous in the annals of that hour began cleaning responsive shotguns to be in readiness for the Masterson call to arms. The word was, if war broke out, to "kill every man with a big cow hat on." The Dodgians, be it known, wore hats of moderate and exemplary rim.

Mr. Masterson believed that if carnage descended it would come in the night. Which perhaps was the reason why Mr. Allison chose the afternoon. Of a sudden the latter gentleman rode into the middle of that single thoroughfare—so often a battlefield—armed to the teeth. Halting his horse in front of Mr. Webster's Alamo Mr. Allison spake loud and fiercely; but he was heedful to leave Winchester and pistols in their scabbards, and while his oratory was terrible his hands continued as harmlessly empty as a child's.

Mr. Masterson at the time was sitting in his office. With the earliest note of war from Mr. Allison he snatched up a shotgun and "covered" that Texas chieftain. Since Mr. Masterson was to the rear of Mr. Allison the latter enthusiast did not notice his "covered" condition.

Having Mr. Allison "covered" Mr. Masterson turned to Judge Colburn, now of Salt Lake City, then district attorney of Dodge.

"Skip out the back door, Judge," observed Mr. Masterson, "and tell Wyatt and the rest that I've got Allison dead to rights. Tell them not to close in on him; if he reaches for a gun I'll have him. When they hear me shoot let them get busy right and left; tell them to bump off every Texan they find in the town."

The warning word went down the line, and Mr. Allison was left unmolested in his eloquence. But that very fact made him uneasy. He was not without a working knowledge of homicide as a science; and the sight of the several heads of Messrs. Earp and Holiday and Bassett and Short and a score besides protruded in an expectant fringe from doors and windows all along the street, as though a common idea obtained that something interesting was about to happen, chilled him and bid him pause. Mr. Allison looked excessively bothered. Finally he shut down his oratory in midflow, got off his horse, limped dubiously into Mr. Webster's Alamo saloon and took a thoughtful drink. Mr. Masterson put away the shotgun and joined him. Observing Mr. Masterson enter, Mr. Allison pretended great joy.

"Where were you, Bat?" he asked. "I've been looking all over town for you."

"I've been seesawing on you with a shotgun for 10 minutes," returned Mr. Masterson grimly. "What's the matter, Clay?"

Mr. Allison appeared a bit confused, but explained that he had been aroused by the insults of a red-headed hardware clerk who didn't know who he, Mr. Allison, was. Being calmer now, he would again disarm in deference to the prevailing local taste as to shooting irons.

Thus the business passed without actual hostilities, and Mr. Allison confessed later that his reason for "simmering" was he had had a "premonition." It's just possible he did. In any event, and whatever the cause, his change of offensive front that afternoon saved many a life. Also it saved Dodge from what would else have proved the ruddiest chapter in all her crimson history.

The Battle Against The Redskins.

A Bluff Called

When the new liquor law took effect in Kansas in '81 Mr. Masterson laid down his office. He was not sumptuary, and while he himself never drank liquor, refused to be drawn into deadly collision with gentlemen whose only offense had been a too vehement thirst. Besides, he urged, considering the many strenuous years he had gone through he felt he had earned a rest.

There was at least one gentleman in Dodge who didn't share this vacation view. The hour was evening, and Mr. Masterson, no longer sheriff, was sitting in the rear room of Mr. Kelly's Alhambra in talk with Judge Colburn. Mr. Bell appeared abruptly in the door, a six-shooter in his right hand, another in his belt. Mr. Bell is the sober, quiet sheriff now of that same county of Ford; but in these, his younger years, he was a sturdy customer and had "shot up" several of his acquaintances. Per incident, he "had it in" for Mr. Masterson.

"I think," remarked Mr. Bell as he stood thus triumphantly in the door, "I think there's a horned toad here I want to kill."

Like a flash the sensitive Mr. Masterson, who had he been either slow or dull would never have lived till now, was on his feet, the muzzle that never missed pointing squarely between the eyes of Mr. Bell. Naturally the latter warrior froze up; he stood as though planet struck.

There was a darkling pause; then Mr. Masterson, gun still unwaveringly upon Mr. Bell, began slowly to advance. Mr. Bell never moved. Coming within reach Mr. Masterson suddenly let down the hammer of his pistol and smote Mr. Bell such a jealous blow upon the head that he went to the floor, and from the floor to his bed for two weeks.

Years later I asked Mr. Masterson why he withheld his fire. "I didn't think I had to shoot," he said. "I once saw Bell jump over a bar counter to get at a man, when he might just as well have gone round, and it struck me all at once that he was much too dramatic. If it had been Wyatt Earp, now, or Dock Holiday, or Luke Short, or Ben Thompson, I'd have begun to bombard him out of hand. But I didn't think such extreme measures were demanded in the case of Bell;" and here Mr. Masterson smiled peacefully at the retrospect. "My size-up of Bell may have been wrong," he concluded, "and if it was I hope he'll pardon me. He ought to, for, between us, it was all that saved him from death that day."

His Adventurous Career

This chronicle of Mr. Masterson might be extended to 100,000 words, and only the half be glanced at, not told. I might relate how he rescued from a mob the State's Attorney General and the chief of the Prohibition Leagues of Kansas when those reforming functionsaries led a temperance crusade against Dodge. Or how when Mr. Webster, of the Alamo, and incidentally Mayor of Dodge, exiled Mr. Short, of the Long Branch—the rival shop—Mr. Masterson, then a citizen of Leadville, returned to Dodge at the militant head of such choice fighting men as Wyatt Earp, Doc Holiday, Henry Brown, Shotgun Collins and Shoot-Your-Eye-Out Jack, to say naught of the redoubtable Mr. Short himself, and restored that persecuted one to all his property rights as well as what elevated station, as owner of the Long Branch, he should occupy in the social life of the place. Or how—this was a case of mistaken identity—Mr. Masterson smote the Pueblo Railway policeman so grievously upon his skull with a six-shooter that the latter officer, who had wrongfully assailed Mr. Masterson with a bludgeon, must be furloughed to a hospital for a month. Or how Mr. Masterson took a man from a mob of lynchers at Buena Vista and carried him before a magistrate; and how, when the magistrate, in sympathetic league with the lynchers, would have committed the man to the local jail, where the mob could get at him, he, Mr. Masterson, tore up the commitment papers in the face of the court and carried the man off to the Denver jail, where subsequently he was sufficiently yet lawfully hanged. Or how Mr. Masterson protected Mr. Holiday from the requisition of Arizona's Governor for killing Mr. Stillwell in Tucson by the simple strategem of having that consumptive gunplayer put under arrest on a charge of highway robbery—a fiction—in Colorado. Or how, when Mr. O'Neal, with a six-shooter in each overcoat pocket, and a hand on each six-shooter, sent forward a drunken ruffian to attack Mr. Masterson, with full and fell intent on Mr. O'Neal's part of "bumping off" Mr. Masterson when once entangled with the drunken one, he, Mr. Masterson, knocked the drunken one senseless with his left fist, while with his right hand he abrutly acquired the drop on the designing Mr. O'Neal. With that never-erring six-shooter upon him Mr. O'Neal's empty hands came out of his pockets and went into the air like winking.

"Don't kill me!" he faltered.

Mr. Masterson's finger was itching upon the trigger. In an instant he shifted. Letting down the hammer he repeated the maneuver which had worked so well in the days of Mr. Bell. Later the wounded Mr. O'Neal, head in bandages, sent from his bed a message of peace, asking Mr. Masterson to see him and give him an opportunity to "explain."

"Well," said Mr. Masterson to the messenger, "I'll come. But tell O'Neal to be careful and keep his hands outside the blankets while he's doing his 'explaining.'"

Or I might set forth how a dear but intoxicated friend, forgetting for the moment—an election moment wherein the "dear friend" resented the indomitable Republicanism of Mr. Masterson—those close social ties which subsisted between them, pulled his pistol, intending the destruction of Mr. Masterson; and how Mr. Masterson shot the weapon from his dear friend's hand and let him live to apologize for sis murderous rudeness. That apologetic one is sober now and a Denver detective of much good repute.

Or I could tell how Mr. Gallagher, of Denver, imported a desperate character, one Smith, for the wiping out of Mr. Masterson; and how Mr. Masterson, when he heard, sent a $100 bill to Mr. Gallagher, with word that the money was his if he would but walk down the street "as far as Murphy's," with his importation. Also how Mr. Gallagher refused the money, and how Mr. Smith made haste to explain that his purpose in coming to Denver was wholly innocuous.

Carried Captive on His Back

Or how—if these be not enough—Mr. Masterson journeyed in the name of friendship, to far-off Ogallala, and surreptitiously bore away Mr. Thompson, then under arrest, but stiff and sore from buckshot wounds, and held captive in a hotel instead of the jail because of them. Mr. Masterson, having advantage of a drunken sentinel, rolled the injured Mr. Thompson in a blanket and packed him to the station on his shoulder. Mr. Thompson aiding his rescue by conveniently fainting away. It was 2 o'clock of a dark morning, every Ogallalan was at a dance in the far end of camp and no one beheld the feat. Which was just as well, since there were more buckshot in Ogallala than had been stopped by Mr. Thompson. Mr. Masterson carried Mr. Thompson aboard train as far as North Platte; and there the excellent Buffalo Bill Cody presented the fugitives with his wife's phaeton and a horse of a temper like Satan's and a hideous hammer head, with which double donation they made their safe way cross-country 300 miles to Dodge.

Or I might give the story of how, when Mr. Short killed Mr. Courtright in Fort Worth, Mr. Masterson took his six-shooters and begged the privilege of sitting in Mr. Short's cell all night, fearing mob violence. Friendship such as Jonathan's would have hesitated at so desperate a step! It turned out well, however, for the would-be lynchers, told by the sheriff that Mr. Masterson and Mr. Short were together in the jail, and each with a brace of guns, virtuously resolved that the law should take its course, and went heedfully home to bed.

These and many more have been the adventures of Mr. Masterson, who, coming up through all this perilous trail of smoke and blood, is now peacefully amassing $10,000 a year as crack writer on the Morning Telegraph. I asked him if he never yearned for the West. He shook his head.

"I'm out of that zone of fire," said he, "and I never want to go back. I hope never to see those dreary plains again."

But the plains come to Mr. Masterson on Broadway, or rather the men of the plains. One day he introduced me to a wiry, eagle-eyed gentleman dressed as though just out of a bandbox.

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