The Low-Down on a High-Up

By Louise Hardwick

As I came out of the lounge of Bishop’s Lodge, a guest ranch in New Mexico, I saw a car bearing an Oklahoma license drive up.

Oklahoma!

After twelve years in humid Louisiana the sight of anyone from the sun-swept prairies of Oklahoma unbalances me.

A car from Oklahoma and a personable male at the wheel! With a gleeful gulp I rushed forward to embrace the driver. As he stepped out and was almost within the arms I heard the well-modulated voice of a woman call:

“Daddy!”

Looking up I saw a most attractive brown-eyed woman with two children: a little blue-eyed-golden-haired son of three years and half past, and a little brown-eyed-golden-haired daughter of two years.

Undaunted I embraced all four, patted the license plates several times, then asked, “Who are you?”

“Lowrey H. Harrell and family from Ada, Oklahoma.”

“Lowrey Harrell? Oh, yes...the newly elected president of O. U. alumni!”

We settled down to exchange information regarding Oklahomans who were out here in Santa Fe: Judge and Mrs. A. P. Murrah at the La Fonda; Mr. and Mrs. J. Fred Orr at the La Posada; Dr. and Mrs. Salter at the De Vargas; Dr. Tilley and family visiting his brother. At an adobe Salyer at the De Vargas; Dr. and Mrs. Murrah at the La Fonda; Mr. and Mrs. J.

Fonda. Man-like, Lowrey was struggling to dress his son. When the most essential article of dress for male bipeds could not be found, Vera spent many minutes looking in traveling cases, wardrobe closets, under beds, behind doors, through all the chest of drawers. Finally with obvious but suppressed, well-suppressed exasperation, she asked her son:

“Jiminy, where are your pants?”

“Jiminy, wholly unconcerned, sweetly said, “What, Mother?”

“Jiminy, where were your pants when you last undressed?” As we eagerly watched his face and listened for the necessary information, Jimmy looked up with a bewildered expression and questioned:

“Mother, if ‘was’ means ‘were,’ what does ‘are’ mean?”

Yes...we eventually arrived at the La Fonda, enjoyed a delectable luncheon of chicken with wild rice, frijoles, enchiladas, tostadas, tacos, salted piñones, piña, and hot spiced chocolate....all to the accompaniment of a Mexican orchestra, Spanish atmosphere in murals, lighting effects, and costumed “muchachas.” After the finger-bowl gesture, however, little Jane, aged two years, jerked our adult imaginations into a kink when she quietly whispered, “Now, I want a hamburger, please Daddy.”

During the morning we spent at the ruins of a large prehistoric Pueblo, Vera revealed a worry that she and Lowrey have silently kept between them for several years. In the museum we studiously read the expositions of cacti and grasses that the Puye Indians used for pottery making, basketry, food, and medicinal purposes. While reading aloud to us the various uses of the Poñi or Apache plume, Vera suddenly stopped, wistfully looked at her husband, hesitantly rubbed the top of his head and murmured, “Oh, dear, do you really think that might help if we tried it?”

Naturally this stimulated my curiosity. I hurriedly peered at the exhibit and this is what I read: “The leaves of the Poñi are steeped and the infusion used to promote the growth of hair.”

Even vacations have their limits. So the morning came for the Harrell family to leave Bishop’s Lodge where they had made many friends....one of whom is an alumna who has a deep admiration for the new president of our Alumni Association. May he have great happiness and success in all phases of his year’s work for the Association.

Mr. and Mrs. Lowrey Harrell view ruins of a Pueblo