THE INNOVATION

Two farmers were looking at a strange new apple tree.

“My landlord invented it,” said the first farmer to the other; “he’s a famous experimentalizer with ten framed diplomas on his wall.”

“Sure is the oddest apple tree I ever run up against,” answered the second farmer. “Who ever seen an apple tree with a purple trunk?”

“Who indeed?” said the first farmer proudly. “And instead of leaves it grows feathers.”

“Yeller feathers! And dang me if the apples ain’t square instead of round!”

“Yes, they’re uncommon all right. Try one. Nice and ripe.”

“Thanks,” said the second farmer, and, plucking one of the apples, he bit into it. “Ouch!” he yelled; “I’m bleedin’!”

“Yep,” said his friend; “cuts your lip like a razor-blade, don’t it. Here’s my hanky.”

The lip was soon healed, but its owner’s frown hung on as he thought and thought. At last he concluded, “Not much of a tree, I reckon,” and he gave the trunk a kick.

The first farmer grew red with indignation.

“Not much of a tree? What do you mean, not much of a tree? Don’t tell me you could have growed it!”

“No, I couldn’t,” replied the other. “I’m stoopid; and some jackass notions it takes a genius to dream up.”

“The Innovation” is one of Oscar Mandel’s 47 “Gobble-Up Stories.” These, together with two extraordinary yarns, “Chi Po and the Sorcerer” and “The History of Sigismund, Prince of Poland,” are gathered in the author’s Otherwise Fables, 270 pages, $16, Prospect Park Books, publishers of the author’s companion Otherwise Poems.