

Widow Jason's Bad Hogs

Widow Jason was the relict of Partner Jason, and she carried on the farm after his death with even more wisdom than he had shown himself possessed of. She was still on the brighter side of forty, fair to look upon and was at peace with all her neighbors until the one to the west of her sold out and a stranger moved in.

He was a man of middle age named Chisholm, and being a widower, his sister managed the house for him. If the Widow Jason was one of those who wondered what sort of man he was, she was the first to find it out. Among her live stock that year were a dozen hogs, and it was the fault of her hired man that there were holes in the fences through which they made their way into the potato field of the new neighbor. She had just finished her breakfast one morning when Chisholm was announced. He had the courtesy to lift his hat and give his name, but he also had the bluntness of a bull.

"Madam, your infernal hogs have ruined up half an acre of potatoes for me, and if you can't manage to keep them home I'll shoot every one of them."

She looked at him and saw that he was no ordinary and felt that he had been introduced in the conventional way she would have been expected to make his acquaintance. His rude greeting angered her, and being a woman with a mind of her own, she at once replied:

"I can pay for all the potatoes on your farm, and if you come here to threaten me you'll find a woman who isn't scared."

"Well, you keep your hogs at home."

"And you keep yourself in the same place."

That was the first tilt. The fences were mended and the hogs were in their pens when a high wind blew a hog over the fence and the drove spent the day in the name potato field. Next morning Chisholm drove ten of them home and said to Widow Jason:

"Madam, there are dead hogs belonging to you in my field. Will you have them removed or shall I bury them?"

"You killed them, did you?" she asked.

"I did. I told you I would, and I'm ahead."

She went to law, and there was a case, and she was ingloriously beaten. Womanlike she felt pretty bitter about it, but at the same time she had to give Mr. Chisholm credit for his mild manner and even spoke highly of her as a neighbor.

When she returned home after the case she said to her hired man:

"Look, that man Chisholm comes on my land again I want you to drive him off."

"I'll do it," replied the hired man.

It wasn't a fortnight before Chisholm came. He was on his way to the house when Josh headed him off and ordered him back. He refused to go and Josh laid hold of him to do a driving act, but found himself man in about three minutes.

Josh sat on the ground with a pile of grass to his bleeding nose and passed on to the woman, who had witnessed the fracas from the front steps. Lifting his hat, he said:

"Madam, those hogs of yours have ruined it again—this time in my field—and I've had to kill an acre of them."

"You dared to kill another of my hogs?" she demanded as her eyes flashed.

"I dare. Shall I bury him?"

"You are a scoundrel!"

"And you are a charming widow!"

She drove to town at once to see her lawyer. There was \$10 in the pocket of her purse, and he advised her to sue. She sued and got her money. The defendant referred to in the highest terms, but he proved that her fences were out of repair. The lawyer saw \$10 more in the pocket of her purse, and he advised her to sue for assault and battery.

She brought his swollen nose and eye into court and was beaten several lengths. He had provoked her, and if he had got the best of it the law couldn't help her.

It was a month before anything else happened. The fences around her lot were thoroughly repaired and four weeks the porkers had made the best of their sad lot. Josh left the bars down one day, and as the widow was getting up she heard the crack of a gun. Half an hour later Mr. Chisholm appeared to say:

"Good morning, Mrs. Jason. Those wretched hogs of yours rooted up my garden last night and this morning I killed another of them. If you want another lawsuit, I'll drive you to town in my own buggy."

"And you—you've shot another?" she gasped.

"I have."

"Then I'd like to shoot you! You are the meanest man in the state of Ohio!"

"Yes'm," he replied, with a bow as he turned away.

Widow Jason drove to town to consult her lawyer again. There was \$10 in it for him, win or lose, but this time Mr. Chisholm was arrested for malicious persecution. In his testimony he referred to the plaintiff as "that lady" and exhibited no animus whatever, but he also proved that he was the one persecuted. The widow's hogs would not let him alone. She was beaten again, and this time a stout pen was built and the hogs were shut up. The farmers had of course taken sides. Some contended that Chisholm had exhibited a mean and unneighborly spirit, and others that the widow had been derelict in not mending her fences, and there was much talk and discussion. It occurred now and then that the two principals met on the highway or at the crossroads meeting house, but white Chisholm lifted his hat and bowed as if there was nothing on his mind the widow, except for her blazing eyes, seemed carved of stone.

That pen held the hogs for a long six weeks, but hogs have their weak points, and patience and perseverance will seek them out. The hot sun warped a board and made an opening, and the industrious swine enlarged it until one night they all passed out and headed straight for the next farm. They fetched up among the pumpkins, squashes, melons and carrots, and during the long hours of darkness they ran riot. They were missed from the pen early next morning, and the widow sat down on the doorstep and cried. She cried because she was vexed, and she cried because she was a woman. Every minute she expected to hear the crack of Chisholm's rifle, and she fully realized that any further appeal to the law would be wasted. She was vexed at the hogs, at Josh and at Chisholm. Her tears were still falling when the new neighbor stood before her and bowed and said:

"Mrs. Jason, those blamed hogs of yours damaged me a hundred dollars' worth last night."

"And how many more have you killed?" she asked.

"None. I've just driven 'em home."

"But why—why?"

"Because I see how it is. I must either kill off your whole drove or build a pen myself. I shall come over tonight to talk to you about it."

He appeared an hour after supper, and it was 11 o'clock before he went home. Even then the "talk" was not finished. As a matter of fact it required a great many evenings and was only concluded one winter night when she laid her head on his shoulder and said:

"If you are really sure that you love me, then the farm, the hogs and I are yours, and we'll be married New Year's Day."

individual claims of citizens of the United States against Spain, which the United States released to Spain and agreed to pay by the treaty of peace of December 10, 1898.

The claims so far filed with the commission which will be affected by this decision amount to about \$2,500,000, which probably would be increased to \$5,000,000 had the decision been favorable to the claimants.

German Students and Beer.

To speak of the pleasures of the German student and make no mention of beer would be like the play of Hamlet with the part of the melancholy Dane left out. As the student strolls about the country or the city, in the music halls and theatres, at his social gatherings of all kinds, at dinner or at supper, he steadily drinks his beer. The code of health, drinking and the etiquette of the drinking bout are complicated and most punctually observed.

All university functions include a great drinking bout—jubilees of renowned professors, club anniversaries, ceremonies in honor of a retiring professor. Any and every ceremony is incomplete without the formal kneipe with toasts. He has attempted to throw a poetical glamour around beer, to invest it with the charm of tradition and to hallow it with old associations of college days.

In Europe the American prefers to drink water, and this is a great mystery to the Germans, who cannot possibly understand how they can prefer this to beer. — Detroit Free Press.

Circumstantial Evidence

Several years ago I attended the superior court for the county of —. A case of murder was tried. The evidence disclosed that the deceased and the prisoner had been drinking together and had quarreled; that the prisoner had struck the deceased; that he had sworn he would be the death of him; that through the intercession of the bystanders a patched-up reconciliation had taken place, willingly on the part of the deceased, doggedly by accused; that the deceased had started to go home by his usual route and that the prisoner had immediately followed him, although his home was in a contrary direction; that sounds of strife were heard shortly after; that the deceased had never again been heard of; that, suspicion having fallen upon the prisoner, his steps upon the night of the difficulty had been traced; that marks of a struggle had been found upon the earth and drops of coagulated blood, and that the accused, having been asked to account for the deceased, denied that he had ever seen him after the moment that he left on the night of the difficulty.

The defence was conducted by the prisoner in person, and it was evident to me that, although the calm and collected manner in which it was made had its impression upon the judge, it had none upon the jurors or bystanders. They had made up their minds as to his guilt and were determined that his life should be taken. The solicitor general closed the case. He dwelt with burning and bitter eloquence upon the crime of murder. He spoke of the cool and deliberate manner of the prisoner and reproached him as one who could gloat like a cannibal over the mangled remains of his victim.

He dwelt with great minuteness, clearness and ingenuity upon the train of circumstances "which could not lie," and he threw a web of guilt around the prisoner that no one doubted would involve him in destruction, but still the prisoner quailed not. The judge summed up the case to the jury, narrating the circumstances and unfolding the law. He admitted that the facts were very strong against the accused, but that one material link was wanting. It had not been proved that Grimes was dead. He concluded by admonishing them that they should not convict unless they had sufficient evidence of that fact.

But this caution was thrown away upon the excited feelings of the jury, who without retiring made up their verdict of guilty, and the foreman was in the act of signing it when the prisoner again rose.

"I ask permission of the court," said he, "to call a witness who, I think, will relieve me of this diabolical charge, who will prove that my hands are not red with my brother's blood, who will show the impropriety and danger of a conviction upon circumstantial evidence—in short, who will satisfactorily convince the malignant and demonlike heart of the solicitor general that I am innocent of this crime."

"Have you any objection, Mr. Solicitor-General?" asked the judge.

"None," responded the state's attorney, with a bitter sneer, "but if he wishes to convince me and to save his neck from the gallows he had better produce John Grimes."

"That is precisely the witness I seek to introduce," said the prisoner. "Mr. Sheriff, call John Grimes."

The proposition created great excitement. Some of the bystanders laughed aloud. Others heaped bitter execrations upon the prisoner. The solicitor general sneeringly asked him if he would have him called again, and the judge was evidently fast changing his favorable opinion of the prisoner, who, he thought, was trifling with the court. He turned to the culprit and was amazed at the terrible change that had taken place in his countenance. Its placidity and composure were gone. It was covered with livid spots, and immense drops of perspiration were rolling rapidly from his brow.

"Call again, in God's name!" shouted he at the top of his voice.

The sheriff repeated the call. The storm that had been slumbering for a short time now burst forth with tenfold violence. The rain beat furiously upon the shingled roof, the wind howled and moaned like a condemned culprit, and several of the large pine trees that surrounded the building fell with a tremendous crash, starting the already excited inhabitants of the court room. It was an awful scene without. It was a still more awful one within. The unearthly appearance of the prisoner, the sudden and awful change that had taken place in him, his solemn adjuration and his earnest manner, all had deeply affected the bystanders, and many looked as if they really expected to see the murdered man arise at the invocation. All were gratified save

the implacable solicitor general, who sat scowling at the accused with a look of triumph and fiendish exultation on his countenance. The judge rallied himself and motioned to the foreman of the jury to proceed, when suddenly an individual arose, no one knew from where, and striding to the witness stand and throwing off a huge cloak which enveloped his form, disclosed to the horror-stricken and amazed crowd the features of John Grimes.

Long afterward I learned that there had been a bet between the prisoner and his supposed victim bearing on the weight of circumstantial evidence.

Terrible Journey.

Salt Lake, March 5.—A special to the Herald from Boise City, Idaho, says:

A party of prospectors reached here today after a terrible fourteen days' journey through the snows from Thunder mountain district, bearing with them the bodies of Bert Tullis, formerly a resident of Telluride, Col., who was killed in a snowslide at Thunder mountain, about a month ago, and men named Campbell and Sykes, also victims of a snowslide.

The bodies, frozen and wrapped in hides, were drawn over the snow from mountain passes, the prospectors undergoing almost incredible hardships to bring out the bodies of their friends.

Towne—See that man. Well, sir, he landed in this country with his bare feet, and now he's got millions. Browne—Great Scott. A regular centipede.—Stray Stories.

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