

PATRIOTISM IN JERICO.

Horatio Sparrow Had An Idea Of His Own

Also a Burning Desire to be Marshal of the Day—Timely Arrival of Lish Billings.

It was about a week before last Decoration day that Horatio Sparrow came into the postoffice looking as if he had something on his mind, and as soon as he had the chance he whispered to me:

"Don't say nuthin to a livin soul, but I'm comin around here to fight and shake the town of Jericho from center to circumference."

"In what way?" said I.

"Never you mind, pap. You jest git ready to feel the airth tremble, and tomorrow mornin you kin put \$200 more value on your house and lot."

Horatio is a man who never gets excited when he wakes up and finds a cow in his garden, and I felt quite sure he had sunthin big on hand. He must hev told about 50 other people what he did me, as there was a big crowd at the postoffice at 7 o'clock in the evenin, and all expected to hear big news.

Deacon Spooner took charge of things, as usual, and as the crowd got impatient he said:

"It is understood, feller citizens, that Horatio Sparrow is goin to launch a thunderbolt here tonight, and it is with more than ordinary interest that I call the meetin to order. Stand out, Jericho, and let's hear all about it."

Horatio stood out. He looked pale, but determined. He'd bin thinkin a week of what he was goin to say, and he started off as smooth as grease.

The drums are beatin a wild alarm. There is a wavin of flags, a marchin of men and a wailin of women and children. War is upon the land. The life of a nation is at stake. It is an hour when men are called upon to give up their lives for the sake of principle.

"By John, but that's flowery language!" exclaimed the deacon as Horatio paused. "If Horatio kin keep it up fur an hour, I'm fur lectin him to the next leigsature."

"The farmer leaves his plow," continued Horatio, "the merchant his store and the mechanic his bench. They march away to find the enemy and fight him and die. Yes; they yield up their lives that we may live on in peace, and if we forgit the sacrifice we ought to wither away like a burdock in November."

"Gentlemen," said the deacon as the applause had subsided, "up to the present minit Horatio Sparrow has knocked the socks off'n Henry Clay as an orator, and I am proud to know that he is a citizen of Jericho. Anything more, Horatio?"

"I jest want to call your attention to the fact that Jericho has never had a Decoration day parade," replied the orator. "We hev never paraded and never decorated, and I say it's a burnin shame and ought to be remedied at once."

"By John, but that's a strong p'int!" shouted the deacon. "Hang me if Horatio ain't knockin things endways! No, sir; we've never had a parade nor decorated any graves, and we ought to be ashamed of ourselves. Is it your suggestion that we celebrate the day this year, Horatio?"

"That's my p'int, deacon."

"And it's as strong as a log chain. Yes, sir; we'll celebrate the day, and in order to make it a howlin success I'll agree to take charge of the parade."

"But I object to that," said Horatio. "Hevin originated this idea, I think it's fur me to ride on horseback at the head of the procession."

There was a painful pause, and then Almer Jones, who was in fireman's uniform, jumped off the counter and said:

"There shouldn't be no jealousy about this thing. Horatio would look purty fine on his spotted horse, and the deacon would be no stouch in his cocked hat, but if there's to be any feelin over it I'll take the job off their hands. As I'm foreman of the fire company it comes in my line anyhow."

"I don't propose to give up my rights for nobody," said Horatio.

"And I'm thinkin I'm the man to boss things," added the deacon.

"I don't want to charge anybody with hevvin too much cheek," said Squar Henshaw, "but it do look a leetle strange to me to see the way certain folks want to crowd to the front on public occasions. If there is a purcession, it's got to be headed by a man who knows how to boss things and can't be rattled. I bossed the parade the last time we had a Fourth of July,

and you may remember that the newspapers said I managed it better than any we ever had."

"I'll allow that the squar did fairly well," said Enos Williams as he shut up his jackknife and got off the sugar bar, "but there are several other folks in this town of Jericho. For instance, I'm here myself. When anything has happened durin the last 20 years, I've bin pushed behind the currant bushes, as it was, and some one else has carried off the honors. I'm comin to the front on this occasion or know the reason why."

"Why, Enos, you don't purtend that you kin boss a purcession, do you?" asked the deacon.

"Of course I kin. Why not?"

"It appears to me," said Silas Lapham as he stood out and rubbed his hands together, "that we are not workin in complete harmony in this matter. It will be the event of the century. It will be known from Maine to California that Jericho has had a Decoration day, and there will be thousands of inquiries fur real estate. Let us sacrifice any selfish interests as individuals and work to make the affair a general success."

"That's powerful good advice," said the deacon as he rapped on the stove with his cane—"powerful good. I allus stand ready to sacrifice, and I hope the rest of you do. Any further p'int, Silas?"

"You may call it a p'int or not," said Silas, "but bein there seems to be a controversy here I think it better be settled by selectin me to boss things. I don't want it because I'm proud and want to show off, but purely in the interests of harmony."

"I'll never surrender my rights!" said Horatio Sparrow.

"Nor me!" added Deacon Spooner.

"Nor me!" yelled Abner Jones and Squar Henshaw in chorus.

It was evident that the meetin was on the p'int of breakin up in a row when Lish Billings come saunterin in as calm as could be. The deacon seen him and called out:

"Feller patriots, before this meetin breaks up in a row that will send the price of Jericho real estate down to 50 per cent and put our civilizashun back 50 years let's hear what Lish Billings has to say about it."

"What's the question?" asked Lish.

"About Decoration day. Shall we decorate?"

"Decorate what?"

"Why, the soldiers graves."

"I don't see how you are goin to do it," said Lish as he scratched his ear. "So fur as I know or hev bin able to find out, nobody from Jericho ever went to war. It tharfore follers that no Jericho man was ever killed. It follers, agin, that you might look the graveyard over fur a month and not find a soldier's grave to decorate."

"Pears to me that you'd better git yer grave fust."

Two minits later Lish was the only man left in the postoffice. It was as he had said—that was nuthin to decorate, and all the blowin had bin fur nuthin.

M. QUAD.

A Kansas Man's Experience.

This story is told by an Atchison man who made a trip in the west: One night after going to bed, he was disturbed by a lot of noisy men in a saloon across the street from the hotel.

The drunken men became noisier toward midnight and the Atchison man, being unable to sleep, got out of bed and resolved to "do something." He resolved to call the clerk and have the drunken men arrested and sent to the police station in the patrol wagon.

So he went down stairs to complain and found the clerk trembling. "Sh!" the clerk said, "there is only one officer in town, and he is drunk with the party. Quick Shot Harned and Bruiser Bill and seven other of the worst men in the territory are in the party. You will be fortunate if they do not attack the hotel and make the guests dance in their night-clothes." The Atchison man crept back to bed meckly and shivered and shook until the drunken men had disappeared with a lot of whoops and pistol shots.—Ex.

A Back Number.

"Son-in-law of mine, too," groaned the hale and hearty old gentleman.

"As bright a young fellow as I ever knew. I loved him as though he were my own flesh and blood. I never got such a throw down from the time I began to work at 50 cents a day to the present time."

"You always told me that he was a veriable Napoleon of finance."

"So I did, and so he is," and the old gentleman made a sorry attempt to laugh. "And I encouraged him in it; I must admit that. I literally drummed it into him that business was business and that sentiment, friendship, even relationship, had to be put aside when it came to striving for money."

"But what has he done? Nothing criminal?"

"Taken me at my word, the world will say. I'm going to retire. I'm out—frozen out. You know the fac-

tory in which I have my biggest investment and controlling interest?"

"Certainly. It is coining money, and your salary as president is \$20,000."

Here the old gentleman groaned again. "I went away for a vacation. What more natural than that my son-in-law should vote my stock? I gave him authority to do so, and I've no doubt that the young rascal recalled all that I had told him. He elected himself president, chose his own board of directors and increased the salary of his position \$5000 per annum. He just jollies me when I take him to task and tells me I should have no cares for the rest of my life. I'm simply turned out to pasture. My, what a boy!"—Ex.

Seth Had Moved.

"It's queer the things we run up against when we least expect it," said the man in the shirt waist as he fanned a cinder out of his eye and looked thoughtful.

"Such as the man who knew your father and tries to borrow money on the strength of the acquaintance?"

"No, I wasn't thinking of that sort exactly, though I've met him too. I was thinking of some folks I used to know in an out-of-the-way corner in Georgia. I always stopped at their place when I went there once a year on business. They had one son named Seth, a tall, rawboned, good hearted chap, without much sense, but good company in that forlorn place. He always met me at the depot in answer to my postal telling him I was coming and drove me out to his father's farm, and we had become very good friends."

"One year I skipped, so that two years had passed since I made my last visit. As usual I sent a postal to Seth and quite counted on seeing his lank form when I stepped out of the cars at the little way station. He was not there and had sent no one in his place, and I was at a loss what to do."

"But seeing a light in the general store of the village, I stepped in and found the usual crowd of rustics sitting on flour barrels and cracker boxes swapping yarns."

"I expected to meet Seth Hollis here. Can any of you tell me where he is?"

"They all grinned, and one man, expanding a mouthful of yellow teeth, said:

"He don't come here any more, stranger."

"What is the reason?"

"He's left these parts, stranger."

"Moved away?"

"Seth? Oh, y-a-s-s! He's moved."

"Can you tell me where he is now?"

"They looked at each other and grinned. I felt sure that poor, foolish Seth had been getting into trouble, and my heart warmed toward him. I would wring it out of these stolid men."

"If you cannot tell me where he is, at least let me know what he has done, I said with some heat."

"Again they exchanged vague, mysterious glances, and one six-footer in hickory shirt and overalls nudged another, who seemed to be the proprietor, as he wore a 'biled' shirt."

"You tell him, Clay."

"No, you, Webster."

"Sho, stranger, you mought as well hear it one time as another. Seth didn't do nothin, but he's been dead now goin on over tew years."—Ex.

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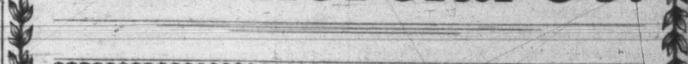
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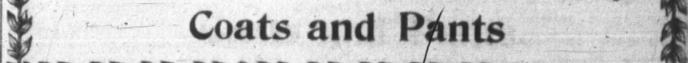
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