

## It Happened on the Territory

One morning, desiring to get an early start and drive into the country some miles before the heat became so intense, we ("Double Sole Kip" and I) engaged a livery for the purpose. The team looked a little fiery and we asked the owner if it was safe. "Just as safe as kittens," was his reply, but I was afraid of the team from the start. We had a light, three-spring wagon loaded with four trunks, two of mine and two of my boot and shoe companion, whom I had dubbed by reason of his initials, Double Sole Kip. He is still living, gray as a rat, or I might say white, and too weak and feeble to sell goods on the road. The team was a well-matched span of brown mares that evidently had run away every chance they had for 15 or 20 years—that was about their age—they looked like it and acted like experienced runaways. We drove out east of town about five miles without incident. It was a delightfully pleasant August morning. D. S. K. was showing me a fine, solid gold watch fob, a miniature horse, an elegant piece of workmanship—a present from a dear friend. He was telling me how he prized it, when we began to descend a short grade. Just as the incline became sufficient to make it necessary for the horses to

hold back a little, the bolt dropped out of the left brace of the tongue and that side of the wagon ran right onto the horses. As I sat on the left side I was interested in this change of program. I did not care anything in particular about horses, but my partner was a horseman and preferred to drive and manage the team. At this juncture in the proceedings I was specially anxious that he should manage them, as the two hind legs of the right mare began to play a double game of fist-a-cuff on the dashboard with a lightning and splintering attachment. I thought I should get a better view of the play from a little distance and hence I stepped out of the vehicle and leaned against the fence. D. S. K. always insisted that I fell out and struck the fence. This was a lie—although I did get out pretty quick and sudden like and came into contact with the fence with an affectionate movement. It was quite surprising, when one considers the early start I had in the affray, to see the picture presented to my view from a fence corner. It was almost impossible to tell who was driving, the hind feet of the team or the trunks. The lines were flying in the air, four horseshoes were trying to grasp them, four great sample trunks were rolling in as many directions. In less time than I could collect my self together and think in good shape, the wagon was turned bottom side up in the middle of the road. The team was gamboling along the highway at a two-minute

gait and poor D. S. K. was trying to extricate himself from a barbed wire fence that had him tied up. No one was hurt, not even the barbed wire fence. We gathered up the trunks, arranged them in a row, righted the wagon, and walked into town two miles away. At the dinner table my partner missed his little gold horse; unavailing efforts were made to find it, but the next year, when we reached the same territory again, the loser was glad to give a little country girl a dollar who had found and returned it to him. It cost us only a couple of dollars to fix up our wreck and we were thankful it was no worse.

#### *We Learn Our Lesson*

It became quite a custom with Brad and me in our peregrinations to put a lot of stones in the front of the wagon at the side of our tool box. About the size of a goose egg, or smaller, the stones were convenient to throw at dogs who took a notion to jump our dog, "Dan." Dan was a good dog—orderly, neat, and knew more than some men. He knew enough to mind his own business; he traveled by the hour and by the day between the horses' forelegs, never varying a foot from his accustomed place. Men and animals alike were no temptation to him to leave his two friends, the horses. He was a most "manly" dog. Our seat was covered and an unloaded gun (a breech-loading Parker) always leaned on the seat between

us. A box of shells was handy. Often we were tempted to shoot some of the dogs that attacked us—bulldogs, yaller dogs, and other members of the canine family were attracted toward us. Our Dan was an object of much interest. It finally became necessary to take to the "stoning process" method of treatment as a means of saving ammunition as well as the lives of the attacking parties. Brad did the driving and I threw the stones.

To facilitate the business I sat on the right side in order to give my arm better play. I thus had a full swing at the victim of our intended (mis) treatment. While it is true that we did not stone a dog unless he came at our dog, still we might have avoided some collisions. If it had not been for the spirit of mischief, a good many less dogs would have gone off the "battlefield" with sore heads. Some of the cases, however, were very aggravating. Dan was often put upon and soundly abused but for our timely interference. In ordinary cases when a small dog, of no harmful size, came out barking and snapping at Dan we paid no attention; but when a big dog of twice Dan's size would "bounce" him, then we took a hand. Driving through a town in northwestern Iowa, we passed an old cow shed. A bulldog of massive dimensions crouched beside a strawpile. He was watching Dan's approach and was ready to spring. His head was between his forepaws and his teeth were perceptible two or three rods away. His ap-

parent owners were loading manure on the other side of the barn. They could see us coming but before the dog was ready to spring, the barn was between us and the two men. I took a large stone in my hand and held it so as to be ready to throw as soon as the bulldog started to spring.

I had my arm already raised and let fly with all my power. He gave one sharp yell, whirled around where he stood, and ran behind the shed. The owners came running toward us and we met their gaze with an unmistakable look of innocence. They looked at the dog and then at us in blank astonishment. It had given no sign of trouble except that one yell, but all his fight was gone.

"Did you see that dog laying there?"

"Yes, he acted rather strangely, did he not?"

"Your dog did not bite him, did he?"

"No, I guess not. Our dog has not been out from between the horses for some time. Look your dog over and see if anything is the matter."

"Nothing is the matter with him. Nothing can hurt him, only he acts so queer like."

We sympathized, condoled, and drove off, and left them as mystified as possible, while we were much amused by our little adventure.

Sometimes a ferocious, pugnacious sort of an animal would come from a house with the evident intention of utterly destroying our favorite. A well-aimed stone would be planted with a dull thud against his ribs and that was refreshing to us

(if not to the dog). I recall, however, an escape that made a lasting impression on us and nearly put a stop to our amusement in this direction. It made us feel like boys throwing stones at frogs, "it was fun for the boys but death for the frogs." We were going into a southern Iowa town one evening just at dusk. Our team was sauntering along slowly after an unusually hard day's work. We were to stop here all night and knowing that our day's work was at an end, we ceased to hurry. Brad spoke and broke the stillness of the occasion, "Cap., see that dog," and pointed to a moving shadow that was gliding along, among the bushes at the side of the highway. I at once conceived of a big dog watching for an opportunity to bounce our Dan. Getting a rock all ready, I waited for the "overt act." It did not come. The slightest movement toward us and I would have thrown the stone. The gliding shadow kept parallel with us and seemed to be on the lookout for a chance to spring. I was on the alert, ready to defend our dog. The sand was taken out of me by Brad's next words:

"For Heaven's sake, don't throw; it's a baby!"

No one but a parent can conceive of my feelings when I dropped the stone and held my breath, burdened with the thought of "what might have been." It was really a little child running along by the side of the road. I was thankful that I had been taught a lesson to be more careful.

*Buying A Blacksmith Shop*

Every commercial businessman is legitimate public plunder. It is legitimate to rob him because custom has so decreed. Everybody *does* rob him; everybody expects to rob him; nobody protests and any time the poor pilgrim dares to say a word in his own defense, he is denounced as a kicker. Hotel men who sell a meal (good, bad, or indifferent) to all creation for twenty-five cents will universally say, "Fifty cents, please," to a commercial man. The baggageman who checks the baggage a transient may have, regardless of size, weight, or condition, will "whoop it up" to commercial men at the rate of so much a hundred pounds. The drayman who would blush to the roots of his hair to charge one of his townsmen ten or fifteen cents to do a little job of taking a couple trunks to the depot, would laugh at the soft snap he had struck when a traveling man gets the same work done for fifty cents.

In all our large towns he is victimized from start to finish. For any extra, unusual errand or inconvenience to those about him, the public sizes up his "pile" and charges him accordingly. Driving into one of northwestern Iowa's thriving county seat towns one day, we broke one of the braces to our wagon tongue. It was a simple fracture, nothing more. It was work to take the iron from the gearing, but Brad did that, and hastened to a blacksmith shop where he held together the two

pieces while they were welded. It took about two minutes. The proprietor of the shop was not very busy and the delay to him was nominal and to us, nothing, as I was "making the town" while Brad was attending to the repair business.

"How much is it?" asked Brad.

"I guess how't I'll hef't cherg ye beout four shillin's fur thet ere."

"About what?"

"Beout four bits, I reckon."

"Half a dollar? Why, man, I just want to pay you for the welding of this iron, that's all."

"Well, I know thet."

"How much is it?"

"It's four bits."

"You don't understand me; I want to pay you for welding this iron. I don't want your shop."

"It's four bits anyhow."

"Look here, old man, I don't want the tools or the shop, nor the outfit; I want to pay you about five or ten cents, a good big price for this work you have done." (I was willing to pay a quarter.)

"Is this yer own team?"

"Yes sir."

"I 'lowed 'twas a livery."

"Well, what of it, if it was a livery?"

"Whose trunks b'm in yer rig?"

"They belong to a hat man I am traveling with."

"Just as I 'lowed. I knowed 'twas a runner's rig. It's fifty cents, mister."



"What's fifty cents?"

"Weldin' that there iron. Runners gin'relly kin pay if they haf to," and the wretch collected fifty cents for his job. He had caught the infection and ascertained that the "runner kin pay if he has to." Who can blame him for "when he was with the Romans for doing as the Romans do."

Driving through Grundy County, accompanied by my wife, we stopped at a farmhouse (that looked as if the people knew how to set up a good square meal) to get some supper. Our team was well-cared for and we were well-fed and enjoyed our rural entertainment. Hitching up to go on our way after our bountiful supper, I said to mine host of the farmhouse:

"What shall I pay, my friend, for our supper?"

"I hardly know what to say," and he put both hands in his pocket and looked out over the broad acres of his beautiful and extensive property, for it *was* fine. "Would you think thirty cents too much?"

I was astonished and at once thought the man meant thirty cents for us two and the team. I was uncertain and asked, "How much did you say?"

"Thirty cents, if that ain't too much; that would be ten cents apiece."

I expressed my surprise at the lowness of the price and tried to get him to take more, but he was "set" in his way and would only accept thirty cents. We drove away, wondering how on earth

that man ever accumulated his valuable and attractive farm.

While we were partaking of his bountiful and almost gratuitous hospitality, we noticed several double-barreled shotguns standing in the corners of many different rooms. I inquired if the locality was a good one for hunting. We were told, with a grim smile from our genial host, "that it depended on what was hunted." Come to find out we were in the neighborhood of the celebrated Rainsbarger murderers. The farmer with whom we were staying had felt the power of that gang of thieves in the loss of a horse or two and an attempt to rob his house. His house and barn were continually under lock and key. Guns kept in the house were loaded and ready for use. It was almost a relief to leave the locality.

We did not always find unselfish hospitality in the rural districts. Mrs. B. and I stopped at a farmhouse for dinner once in northern Iowa. The family was just ready to sit down to a bountiful repast. It was noon and the harvest hands were just in from the field. The lady of the house was the "man of the house," and to this day we do not know which of the several "hands" was the husband. Whichever one he was, he had a good boss. She flew around in the house and outdoors like a fly on a hot skillet. She was glad to have us stop. She evidently did lots of business of this kind. It was ten miles from the nearest town in the direc-

tion we were going. We had a farmer's good dinner, well-cooked, well-served, and well-seasoned. It was enjoyed by all. The "lady of the house" went with us to our carriage, hustling around to get us off in good shape.

"What shall I pay you, madam?"

"A dollar and a half," she said smiling a dollar and a half smile.

I paid her the dollar and a half, thankful she did not know that I had more. She did know, however, that I was a commercial traveler and her observation had taught her that I (and all of my class) was legitimate public plunder. Her predilection made it quite the thing to "put it onto us" to the extent of her ability to collect. The difference between the two farmers, the one charging thirty cents and the other a dollar and a half for the same thing, was this: One was informed, the other not, that commercial travelers were legitimate public plunder. One took advantage of the condition, the other did not. One was avaricious and grasping, the other kind and liberal.

K. W. BROWN