The Transcript.

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The Widow's One-Horned Cow

When Farmer Watkins, widower, sold his farm on the Four-Mile road and purchased one over on the country line alongside that of the Widow Hooper, his old and new neighbors looked for trouble. Farmer Watkins who was more familiarly known as "Uncle Jim," was a very quick-tempered man, and was always watching out that no one stepped on his coat-tails; and the Widow Hooper was a red-headed woman who had rights and was ready to fight for them. As soon as "Uncle Jim" got settled in his new home he greased his boots and put on a clean shirt and went over to see the widow. He was hospitably received. He rather liked the looks of the woman, and she was favorably impressed with him.

"I want to be neighbors and friends," he said. "I'm willing to lend plows and drags and rakes and hoes, and sha'n't have no trouble over line fences or jumping steers. I'm a peaceful man, and I want to be at peace. If my hens bother you, you shoo em' back, and if yours bother me, I'll shoo 'em back. If you'll make soft soap for me, I'll make cider vinegar for you, and I guess things will go on all right."

The widow replied to the effect that she was patient and long-suffering, and only too anxious to live at peace with everybody in Huckleberry county, and the two parted with the very best opinion of each other. That opinion held for a week. Then Uncle Jim got up one morning to find one of the widow's cows in his cornfield. It was a one-horned cow and a jumper. She had sailed over a six-rail fence to get to the corn. There was some swearing as she was driven out, but Uncle Jim held on to himself better than could have been expected. Three mornings later the one-horned cow was back again. This time the swearing was louder and the words longer, and Uncle Jim threw stones, but he cooled off without any damage being done. Two nights passed, and then the rising sun shone on the body of the widow's cow again. She wasn't in the widow's barnyard, where she belonged, but in the widower's cornfield, where she had eaten her fill for the third time.

"Now, by the great gum canoe, but I'll have her life!" shouted Uncle Jim as he observed the intruder; and as soon as he could arm himself with a stake he was after her.

There are some one-horned cows who will stand still and take a pounding with meekness and humility, but this was not one of them. She went galloping up and down and across until she had trampled dow an acre of cornstalks and got Uncle Jim's dander up to the shotgun point, and then she sailed over the fence and took her way homeward. Breakfast was ready but Uncle Jim didn't wait to eat a mouthful. He headed for Widow Hooper's house, 80 rods down the road, and he had a lecture on one horned cows all ready to deliver. As if enough had not happened to raise steam to the danger point, he arrived just as the widow was driving a number of pigs out of the yard. Of course, it happened that one of the perverse animals took a short cut and dashed at Uncle Jim's legs and tumbled him over, and when he rose up 10 men couldn't have held him.

"You—you own a blamed old one-horned critter of a cow," he shouted as he stood before the widow.

"Yes," she answered.

"And she's jumped my fence—and eaten up my cornfield—and damaged me a hundred dollars—and—and—"

"Have a drink of buttermilk and get your breath back," said the astonished widow.

"I won't do it! I tell you your infernal camel with one horn has knocked down all my corn, and you've got to pay for it or I'll give you a dozen lawsuits! And when I come here to tell you about it, what do you do? You set a hog on me and tumble me into the onion bed!"

"I never set no hog on you!" exclaimed the widow.

"Yes, you did, and don't deny it! Widow Hooper, I'll knock the other horn off that cow!"

"Don't you dare to!"

"I'll knock her head off! I'll have her life if she ever steps on my land again! I want damages for that corn, and I want pay for being knocked down by a scrub hog!"

When a man begins to swing his arms and talk in threatening tones to a red-headed widow who has been her own boss for several years, he is loading a torpedo to explode under his own feet. It was not five minutes before Uncle Jim was being "sassed back" in a way to make his hair curl, and it wasn't ten before he was ordered off the place and defied to do his worst. That was the beginning of a quarrel in which half the country was interested when peace came. When Uncle Jim had a couple of hours in which to cool off he wished he hadn't one it, and before dinner was ready the Widow Hooper was sorry she had been so quick with her tongue. But, of course, neither one had a thought of turning back.

"Hanner," said Uncle Jim to his old-maid sister, who was his housekeeper, "that red-headed widow and her infernal one horned cow think they can walk all over me because I've got the disposition of an angel, but I'll show 'em Hanner. I'll show 'em that James Watkins can't be ground into the earth as easy as they think for! I'll bring a law suit for damages tomorrow, and I'll make that woman think that cyclones and earthquakes and tornadoes are after her!"

"Moses," the widow was saying to her hired man about the same hour, "I'm the humblest, peacefulest woman in Huckleberry county, and you know it, but I can't stand everything. I've been sassed and threatened by that man Watkins, and I'll show him that he can't wipe his boots on my apron. If he'd have come here as a neighbor should, I'd have put a poke on the cow, and I'd have apologized for the hog, but now I'll never do it, Moses—never, never, never!"

Whenever a farmer is ready to sue his neighbor he can always find a lawyer willing to tell him that he has a good case. Uncle Jim had no trouble on that score, and the suit promptly begun. He had hardly got back home to tell Hannah about it when the one-horned cow decided to pay him another visit. She was tired of cornstalks, however, and she took cabbages for a change. The golden sun of a summer's morning came up to gild the remains of what had been 50 plump cabbage heads when the wipporwill sang the night before, and Uncle Jim jumped up and down on his old straw hat and was so near the exploding point that he couldn't get out a word. The cow hadn't taken herself off as a conscientious cow should after the act of devastation, but lingered around to hear opinions of her conduct. She got them whacked into her with pieces of broken fence rails, but though he did the very best, and no man could do more, Uncle Jim couldn't knock that other horn off. She carried home bumps and lumps and whacks and bruises, but she also carried her horn.

There was another law suit which the widow proposed to defend as promptly and vigorously as the first, and while the law was trying to deal out justice to cows and cornfields, other incidents occurred. One of Uncle Jim's oxen trespassed on one of the widow's fields, and she sued the owner. Then six of her hogs rooted up six bushels of potatoes, more or less, for Uncle Jim, and he gave his lawyer a third retainer. The suit was a thing of the future when two of his calves got into the widow's garden and ate up all her gooseberries, and she rode to town and asked the aid of the law. The law wasn't sure whether calves fed on gooseberries or onions, but she found a lawyer willing to make a test. At this stage of the game there had been enough law suits started to last a reasonable person a year or two, but that old one-horned cow had further business on hand. She went for a moonlight walk one night and fetched up among Uncle Jim's squashes to meditate. As she reflected on the dim past she bit hunks out of the Hubbards, and the next morning the farm was squashless. She saved her horn again, and her doings almost threw Uncle Jim into an epileptic fit, and of course, his lawyer advised him to sue for damages. The summons had scarcely been served on the widow when the same cow decided on making a farewell tour of that portion of Huckleberry county known as the Watkins farm. She started early and stayed late, and jumped every fence and visited every cornfield, and success crowned her efforts in every direction, even to tearing the pump out of the family well and chewed the bed quilts left on the grass after washing. Uncle Jim started out with a shotgun to drop that cow dead in her tracks, but the gun wouldn't go off. Then he changed it for a sled-stake and did some of the fastest running of his life, but the cow kept ahead. Then he sat down and cussed and cried in turns, but he couldn't do justice to his feelings. Even when he figured on bringing a law suit for $500 damages and asking the court to send that cow to an insane asylum he didn't feel sure it was revenge enough. To his sister's surprise, he threw down his club and left the one-horned cow to jump the fence where she pleased, and he had been sitting under the old Bartlett pear tree for two long hours, when she went out to him and asked:

"Jim, have you broke a blood vessel or anything?"

"Noap," he briefly replied.

"Ain't you going to start another law suit?"

She left him there for another hour wondering if he meditated murder and how many lives he would demand, and then he came in on his own accord, and passed up to his room. When he came down half an hour later, he was dressed in his Sunday clothes.

"Jim, are you going to town to see the lawers?" she asked with a sudden pallor.

"Drat the lawyers!" he replied.

"Then, where are you going?"

"To see the Widow Hooper"

"Don't do it, Jim! You'll surely be hung up if you do!"

"I'll be hanged if I don't!" he muttered as he walked off.

The Widow Hooper was getting dinner ready when some one walked in at the open kitchen door and sat down. She had been sticking a fork into a piece of pork in the pot to see if it was done and she held the fork in her hand, and that hand shook and trembled, as she gazed at Uncle Jim.

"Widow," he began, "you own a one-horned cow."

"Y-yes."

"She won't keep away from me. She won't let me alone. She's bound to root up my whole farm with that one horn of hers."

"W—well?"

"I've sued you and you've sued me. It's mostly on account of that pesky cow. She's going to make trouble as long as we live this way."

"But do you expect me to kill her?" asked the widow.

"No ma'am, I don't. I expect you to marry me and let me bos that cow and make a decent critter of her. That's what I'm here for—to ask you if you'll have me."

"But Mr. Watkins, this—this—" she stammered as she she sat down.

"Yes, it's sudden but if I give that cow one more night I shan't have as much as a carrot left. I'll jog into town and tell the lawyers to stop all these suits, and I'll drop in as I come back for your answer."

When Uncle Jim reached home at sundown his sister met him with looks of anxiety, and asked:

"You—you haven't murdered the widow, Jim?

"Naw," he replied.

"But I thought—thought—"

"I've been up there putting a poke on that infernal cow so she can't jump any more, and being as I was about it, I put a poke on the widowa t the same time, and we're going to be married next month!"

VIGOROUS AND STURDY.

Those who imagine that Grover Cleveland's present retirement from public affairs is in any sense due to advancing years are very much mistaken.

When seen today at his home, at Princeton, N. J., Mr. Cleveland looked the embodiment of health and mature vigor. His step was as firm and his eye as bright as in the campaign of 1892. In fact, the juvenating rest of the last six years had erased a number of wrinkles that has accumulated during the stress and strain of two presidential terms.

The ex-President is somewhat less corpulent than formerly, ruddy, bronzed complexion of a chaffeur.

The settled expression of his face is one of good-humored complaisancy, sobered every now and then with a look of serious conviction, as he discusses the political and international problems of today and tomorrow.

By means of his frequent out-door recreation, fishing, duck-hunting, etc., Mr. Cleveland has enabled himself to cary his 65 years lightly.

This, with the fortunate temperament of a man who keeps his friends and forgets his enemies, places him, physically, in the same class with Bismarck, who was chancellor, of Germany at 75, and Gladstone, who was prime minister of Great Britian at 85. Mr. Cleveland's memory of names and dates seems not to be in the slightest degree impaired. Incidents that occured during both his first and second administrations he recalled with ease, even quoting word for word his recommendations to Congress on several occasions.

The home in which he has lived since his retirement is a large yellow, frame house, built in colonial style. It is in no way larger or more preatious than the neighboring houses. It is surrounded by more shade trees than the others.

THE CLEVELAND CHILDREN.

Several huge snowballs and two half-melted snow men in front of the door gave evidence of the play of the children, and in the large parlor, on the left of the hall, a phonograph concert was being given by the three Cleveland children to several of their playmates.

Mr. Cleveland's private study is a rather small room opening from the dining room. Books of legal, historical, economic and other subjects are ranged in shelves on all sides, and in one corner is a somewhat small flat-topped desk.

One of the study doors opens outside, and during the interview a poorly dressed man knocked at the door and poured out a tale of hard luck into the sympathetic ear of the ex-President. Mr. Cleveland looked disturbed, fumbled for a few moments in his pockets and then handed the man 50 cents, with a half-apologetic air.

"Perhaps this will help you out."

His four-year-old son had just danced in to show a new balloon, which, he said, "I bought with my own money."

"Who is that man, papa," he asked.

"He is a poor man, my boy, who can't find any work," replied Mr. Cleveland, "and so we had to give a little money to keep him from being hungry."

There are no liveried servants in the Cleveland home. Everywhere there is an appearance of old-fashioned comfort and simplicity. No jangling telephone bell or street-car gong disturbs its quiet. Here in the peaceful little university town Mr. Cleveland has recuperated from the cares and troubles of eight years in the White House, growing younger instead of older with every succeeding New Year.

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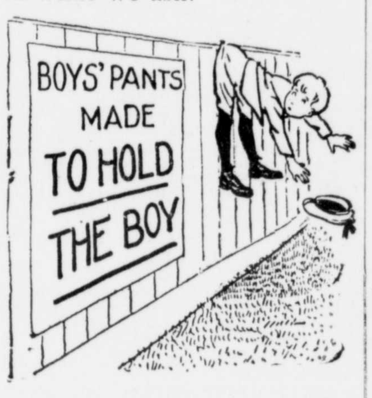

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Cash Capital	$1,250,000.00
Reserve for Reinsured (legal standard)	6,798,504.68
Reserve for all Unsettled claims.	1,209,716.33
NET SURPLUS over Capital and all Liabilities	3,000,855.44
Total Cash Assets	$12,259,076.45

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