

The Fireside.

THAT LINE FENCE.

BY H. ELLIOTT M'BRIDE.

For some time there has been a speck of war between two farmers living in West Fairfield. The farmers were John Hanaford and Samuel Simpson.

Hanaford's hogs had crawled through a hole in the line fence between Hanaford and Simpson and had destroyed some of Simpson's corn. And soon after this a lively old horse belonging to Simpson had got over the same piece of fence and travelled recklessly around taking some sweet corn in one place, two or three bushels of apples in another place, and finishing up with a peck or two of late peaches in another place.

Simpson believed that according to the arrangement made some years before that it was Hanaford's duty to keep up the fence in that particular place, while Hanaford was quite as positive that it was Simpson's work, and that Simpson had been neglecting his duty sadly.

Mr. Hanaford had said in the presence of his family: "There'll be a hullabaloo in this township before many years pass away if that man Simpson doesn't keep his hogs at home. I'll sue him by the law and make him understand what's what and which is which."

And Mr. Simpson had talked in about the same way in regard to Mr. Hanaford, and had said that things couldn't run on as they had been running.

Mr. Hanaford's son John met Mr. Simpson son William one day near the line fence which was causing the trouble, and John said:

"There's been a good deal of trouble between your father and mine on account of a little piece of fence, and it seems that the pleasantness which has existed for so long is liable to be broken up. Can't we do something to settle the trouble?"

"I think so," replied William; "and I have thought for some time that if we could just lay our heads together we could certainly fix the matter up."

"Well, then," said John, "I propose that you and I take the matter into our own hands and say nothing to the old gentlemen about it. It is a little matter anyhow, I think, but when one old farmer thinks that another old farmer is imposing on him, and he is not getting his rights, then the other farmer will think that he is the party that has been abused and ill used, and then they are both ready to fly to arms and engage in a fight."

"You're correct," said William.

"Now," continued John, "I propose that we take this matter into our own hands."

"That would suit me exactly," responded William. "I have been thinking to speak to you about it, but have refrained. I thought perhaps your views on the question as to who should build the fence were the same as your father's, and so I said nothing. What's your proposition?"

"It's a small matter anyhow," continued John, "and I think we can fix it up all right in a short time and have considerable fun out of it, too. I propose that we be absent from home some night. We can tell our parents that we will be away part of the night and

we can say that we are not going to be in any mischief, but, rather, we will be doing a good work. Then I will take our team, and, with your assistance, we can move the rails that we will need and have all the work done in, probably, three or four hours."

"Good for you," said William. "I'm with you. And won't the old gentlemen be surprised when they go out the next day and see that 'the bone of contention' has been removed! That's tip-top. I'm glad you spoke of it. I have teit badly over the matter for some time and feared there would be trouble. But this will clear the sky."

"And the clouds will roll away," added John. "Then let us decide when we will do the work."

"I propose," said William, "that we do it to-night."

And so the boys, or young men, proceeded to their work and had it accomplished at one o'clock in the morning.

Then they went to their respective homes, slept well and dreamed of the astonishment of their fathers when they should first set eyes on the improved fence.

The next day Mr. Hanaford happened to be out on the farm near to the place where the work had been done, and he noticed the change in the appearance of the fence.

"I wonder what that means, anyhow," he said. "I suppose Simpson has at last come to his senses and has concluded to fix it up. Well, he isn't such a bad sort of a man after all."

Mr. Simpson didn't see the repaired fence until the day following the one on which Mr. Hanaford had observed it.

"Well! well!" he said, "the man has come out all right. He just took a stubborn spell—that was all. Mules will get stubborn, and there are men who will get that way, too. Well, I am glad that the matter has got itself fixed up at last. I don't think neighbors ought to quarrel, but occasionally we do run against a man who looks only through his own eyes and will not see at things in any other way."

In about a week after the repairing of the fence had been done, Mr. Hanaford met Mr. Simpson and he thought something ought to be said in regard to the repairing.

"Samuel," said Mr. Hanaford, "I'm glad that you've come to see things in the right light and have fixed up that fence. I always said you were a straight man and I felt sure you would come out all right. I'm very much—"

"What are you talking about?" responded Simpson. "I didn't fix up the fence. I supposed you had done it, and I just wanted to express my delight because you had acted so magnanimously."

"Magnan—nothing!" said the other. "I didn't touch it."

"Who upon earth could have done it, then?" said Simpson.

"That's what nonplusses me. I'm kind of knocked out sideways. When you didn't do it, and when I didn't do it, I don't know who could have done it. I'm knocked out as flat as a pancake."

The two boys then came on the scene and one of them said: "We saw you both coming in this direction and we

thought we'd come, too, to save trouble. Didn't know but you might get angry and scold each other for doing the work. John and I did the work a few nights ago when you were asleep. Pretty good job, isn't it? We think we are entitled to some credit."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Hanaford, "you have done well. And now," he continued, turning to Mr. Simpson, "here's my hand, and, in the language of Gen. Grant—'let us have peace.'"

"Yes, that's correct," said Mr. Simpson, "and I hope that peace may ever continue."

This settled the line fence question.

WHY HE WAITED.

Russell Sage, on a recent birthday, talked in an interesting manner about the famous Americans he has known. Apropos of Henry Ward Beecher, he said:

I went to Beecher's church one night to hear him preach. But Beecher, unexpectedly, had been called out of town, and in his place in the pulpit there sat a beardless, black-clad youth.

"But this youth, fresh from college, was unknown, and the great congregation had come to hear Beecher, and not him. Consequently, as soon as he arose and announced that he was to preach in Beecher's place, the people began to drift out.

First one went, then two, then half a dozen, and the young man stood watching this dispersal from the pulpit. It was a trying moment, and yet there sat on his youthful face a smile singularly composed. Out the people tiptoed, and he waited, saying nothing for almost five minutes.

"Then he said, as if in explanation of his silence, 'We will not begin this public worship until the chaff blows off.'"

HE WASN'T ASHAMED.

A clerk and his country father entered a restaurant Saturday evening and took seats at a table where sat a telegraph operator and a reporter. The old man bowed his head and was about to say grace, when a waiter flew up, singing "I have beefsteak, codfish balls and bull-heads." Father and son gave their orders, and the former again bowed his head. The young man turned the color of a blood-red beet, and touched his father's arm, exclaimed, in a low nervous tone:

"Father, it isn't customary to do that in restaurants."

"It's customary with me to return thanks to God, wherever I am," said the old man.

For the third time he bowed his head, and his son bowed his head, and the telegraph operator paused in the act of carving his beefsteak and bowed his head, and the journalist pushed back his fish ball and bowed his head, and there wasn't a man who heard the short prayer that didn't feel a profounder respect for the old farmer than if he had been president of the United States.—Selected.

Little self-denials, little honesties, little passing words of sympathy, little nameless acts of kindnesses, little silent victories over favorite temptations,—these are the silent threads of gold which, when woven together, gleam out so brightly in the pattern of life that God approves.—Canon Farrar.

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WHY HIS DEBTS WERE HEAVY.

There's many a true word spoken in jest, as the following will illustrate:

A local preacher at the conclusion of one of his sermons, said:

"Let all in the house who are paying their debts stand up."

Instantly, every man, woman and child, with one exception, rose to their feet. The preacher seated them, and said:

"Now, every man not paying his debts stand up."

The exception noted, a care-worn, hungry-looking individual, clothed in his last summer's suit, slowly assumed a perpendicular position.

"How is it, my friend," asked the minister, "that you are the only man not to meet his obligations?"

"I run a newspaper," he meekly answered, "and the brethren here who just stood up are my subscribers, and—"

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