

THE MORTGAGE BIG.

Did you ever see a mortgage big?

A mortgage big;
It eats the farm, the cow and pig,
The cow and pig;
It eats the butter and the cheese,
It eats the hives of honey bees,
It eats the peach and apple trees,
The apple trees.

It eats the handsome two-year-old,

The two-year-old;

The pretty gelding must be sold,

He must be sold.

It eats the wheat, the oats and corn,

The farmer's heart with grief is worn,

His overalls are tattered and torn,

Are tattered and torn.

It eats the duck and it eats the hen,

It eats the hen;

It comes in the dark you know not when,

You know not when.

The farmer's wife is filled with sighs,

It puts the tear drops in her eyes,

It steals her plums and apple pies,

Her apple pies.

It makes her wear an old print dress,

An old print dress;

It fills her soul with great distress,

With great distress.

It hurts and injures every arm,

She knows down in her bosom warm

That's why the boys all leave the farm,

They leave the farm!

Did you ever see a mortgage big?

A mortgage big;

It eats the goose, the colt, the pig,

The colt, the pig;

It eats the hay stack and the pen,

It makes a wreck of perch and pen,

And oh! it makes a wreck of men,

A wreck of men!

—The Khan.

SILVER JOHN.

We were all in Painter's rooms in the Temple. It was a hot night, and the Major had been sitting by the window, and had not opened his mouth once except for a drink. Then we pulled a chair into the middle of the room and dragged him into it. "Tell us how you left America, sir," said Painter, holding out a cigar box. The Major chose a weed deliberately, and this is the story he told:

"The town of Starbuck had sprung up immediately after the construction of the Mock-ton and Ashville Railway. It had become a country seat even before a plough, drawn by a yoke of steers, had done marking out the principal streets, and the first office building made of unplanned pine woods, bore over the narrow entrance the following information: 'Geo. W. Babriod, Attorney-at-Law.'

"The blacksmith's shop, the nucleus round which the country town usually springs, had not been built when I wrote that sign with blacking and a paint brush.

"A stranger, in commenting, in a good-natured way, upon the seeming haste in setting up a lawyer's office, said: 'I always thought that the lawyer was a sort of unavoidable evil of the old settlements; and never before had cause to suppose that he was a necessity to an embryo community.'

"That's all well enough," a lank fellow, leaning against a tree, answered, "but mebbey you don't know these fellows like we do. We know mighty well that there's goin' to be a good deal of cuttin' an' shootin' here before many houses are put up, and as we air a law-abidin' set of folk, we'll want the lawyer to git us out of scrapes."

"Well, one house went up after another, or, if you will, one house went up before another, until Starbuck had the appearance of quite a village. The blacksmith got down to his work, the justice of the peace stacked up his worthless books, and I pleaded the cause of the miscreant. I grew with my surroundings, and soon held a mortgage on a pretty fair crop of potatoes, grown by the man that had dug the town well, and who had, at an idle and dull time, stabbed the fellow who had stood on the top and received the buckets of clay.

"A courthouse was built, and other lawyers came and reared their edifices, and the scent of much necessary litigation was sniffed in the air, but no attorney, however aspiring he might be, tried to place himself upon a litigious par with your humble servant.

"One day, while the town was fitfully dozing under the glare of a mercilessly hot sun, a great commotion arose in the street. I sprang up from my pine table and hastened to the door. Here I was confronted by a party of noisy men. Some were declaiming in loud tones, some were muttering, and all were swearing. "We want to come in," said the leader of the gang, addressing himself to me.

"All right, gentlemen," I replied, stepping back and bowing; "you are all welcome—that is, as many as can get in."

"The men eagerly pushed their way through the door, and the room was soon filled.

"Now what, can I do for you?" I asked, when with difficulty I had found room enough in which to turn about and address the crowd. "But before you proceed to explain, let me tell you most emphatically that I cannot consent to become a candidate for office."

"Here I stopped and anxiously scanned the faces about me, and Dick Munday hastily declared that no one was thinking about asking me to run for office.

"We have come on a more serious business," Munday continued. "A feller comes to town this mornin' an' claims that he has a deed to this here lan', an' that we'll have to be driv off after we have built up our homes, an' we don't intend to do it, that's all. We don't intend to shed nobody's blood, but we

don't want to give up our rights without some sort of a fight; so we thought that as you are interested along with the rest of us, an' 'known' that you air the best lawyer anywhar about, we would come to you an' ask you to put the thing in the court for us, an' see that it goes through all right."

"Gentlemen," I responded, making as much of a bow as the limited space about me would admit, "I thank you for the confidence you repose in me, and I assure you that it shall not be misplaced.

"I thought that our titles to this land were perfect, and I believe now that they are. At least we shall see. Rest assured that I will do everything in my power to protect your homes. By the way, who is the party that sets up the claim?"

"He is a swelled and fancy-lookin' feller from some city," Munday answered.

"All right; let him or his attorney confer with me. I will show him what it is to attempt such wholesale robbery."

"That night a great indignation meeting was held. It was known that I had undertaken the fight of protecting the rights of the people, and a sort of song, not unlike a campaign hymn, was sung in praise of the champion.

"The next day, while I was sitting in my office, feeling thankful that I was soon to become the leading man of that part of the country, a portly well-dressed individual entered the apartment.

"Is this Major Babriod?" the visitor asked.

"You have hit it the very first shot," I answered. "Sit down."

"The visitor sat down, and taking out a bunch of papers, looked over the documents for a few moments, and then said:

"I was not in this part of the country when your town was laid out, or I should have given warning that this land was not in the market. I have a deed here which I don't imagine can be disputed."

"Oh!" I exclaimed. "You are the man that has brought about all this trouble—eh?"

"I hope that I have not brought about any trouble, but I am assuredly the man that will bring about a decision of justice. I have often heard of you. You came here from Dabbs county, I believe?"

"Yes, sir," I assented.

"I thought so," my visitor continued. "I say that I have often heard of you, and I must confess that from what I heard I was hardly prepared to find you so reckless with regard to the rights of others. I was told that you were a man of fine judgment, and that you stood a chance of one day occupying a place on the supreme bench of the State."

"But I see that I have been wrongly informed, for, instead of finding you a man of judgment, I discover that you have taken a case that you cannot hope to win—a case in which justice will oppose you. What is your house and lot worth?"

"Oh," I began, slowly scratching my head, "I should think that if we get another railway—and another one is talked of—my property here ought to be worth £300."

"Cost you £50, I suppose."

"Well, y—yes."

"Now, I'll tell you what I'll do. I could get any lawyer in the States; but the fact is, I want you—want a man who is identified with the place, so, if you will take up my case I will agree to give you £300 for your property, and in addition a handsome sum when the case is won. What do you say?"

"What is your name?" I managed to ask.

"John Cowerton," my visitor answered.

"Some people call me Silver John, but in the meantime please do not mention the fact that I have called on you."

"There was no danger of my mentioning it. I went out, after the wealthy man was gone, and strode along the street. After all, why should I stand by the people of the town? What had they done for me? Did not I have to buy land, the same as the rest of them? By defending the town's people, I could at best save only my home; but by gaining the case for Silver John, I could sell my home for a good figure, or retain it, just as I liked, and, besides, secure a large sum in case. I was a lawyer, and was looking for clients. And I had found one.

"Silver John was in time that night, and all the arrangements for the suit were made.

"Now," said the client, rising, "I shall have to go, but I will see you again soon. Good night."

"You can imagine I did not sleep that night for dreaming of money and high places. I could tell the people that my regard for justice had driven me to the extremity of opposing them, and I felt that when they had thought over the situation they might not hold me in a loving grasp, but they would not choke me in revenge. I had gone to my bed, but was still musing, when I heard a great tumult in the street.

"I wonder what that means?" I said, getting up, hastily putting on my clothes, and going to the door. Looking out I saw a dark, moving mass.

"Come out of thar," a voice shouted.

"That you, boys?"

"Yes. Come out here."

"What do you want?" I asked in tones that trembled, for a half-suspected fear had seized me.

CHASE'S CHAPTER

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"Want you."

"The mass came nearer, and by the light shining through the doorway I recognized some of my neighbors.

"Hello, boys what can I do for you?"

"We don't want you to do anything for us. Want to do somethin' for you. We ain't got time to explain much. You have sold yourself to th' inimy, and we air going to hang you."

"Great heavens, boys—"

"Grab him. Hush yo' yollerin', ur we'll gag you."

"They took me down by the spring branch where an oak leaned over the stream.

"String him up here!"

"Hold on!" demanded a big man, with a slouch hat drawn over his face. "I am an officer of the law and want this feller—want to take him back to Tennessee. Let me have him, I say."

"The men fell back, and the big man, taking hold of the rope that had been tied about my neck, led me away. We crossed the clearing, passed through a skirt of woods, and then walked on, neither of us speaking.

"What are you going to take me to Tennessee for?" I asked, breaking the long silence.

"Hush!"

"On we went, and the darkness deepened, more and more, as if black curtains had been drawn to shield from sight the birth of a new day.

"Sit down here," said the big man, pushing me towards a log. Then I sat down, and the big man stood with his back to me. An owl scrambling into his hole, a dawn-bird twittered; it was daylight.

"The big man turned toward me as he said:

"You don't know me?"

"No, I don't believe I do."

"Dan Moore?"

"That made me start."

"If you are Dan Moore, why did you wish to save my life? I drove you out of a Colorado town."

"Yes, and I have driven you out of Starbuck. I am also Silver John, unwhiskered. I never had any title to that land, and I merely started the report to stir up public feeling. I knew that I could get you to take up the case, and I also knew that those fellows would hang you, but I felt sorry for you at the last moment.

"I saw that you would become the leading lawyer of the community, and as I am somewhat of a lawyer myself, I thought that I would like to take your place. But I couldn't run you out as you had run me, so I had to resort to a little trickery.

"Trickery is permissible in law, I believe. Now, you may go; but if ever you come back to Starbuck, or even settle in the neighbourhood, I will make those fellows hang you. I have already made a settlement with the man who claimed their land," he added, with a chuckle.

"I hope you will have a pleasant journey. The weather is pleasanter than it was when I left town at the muzzle of your pistol, listening to the howling of a hundred ruffians. You quite understand, I hope, that it will be safer for you to give this place a wide berth in the future. Don't let me detain you. Good-bye."

The major had finished. Painter thanked him solemnly and refilled his glass. But we never believed a word he said after that.

Attorney—I insist on an answer to my question. You have not told me all the conversation. I want to know everything that passed between you and Mr. Jones on the occasion to which you refer.

Reluctant witness—I've told you everything of any consequence.

"You have told me that you said to him, 'Jones, this case will get into the courts some day.' Now, I want to know what he said in reply."

"Well, he said: 'Brown, there isn't anything in my business that I'm ashamed of, and if any snoopin' little yee-hawin', four-by-six, gimlet-eyed shyster lawyer with a half pound of brains and sixteen pounds of jaw, ever wants to know what I've been talking to you about you can tell him the whole story.'

Here and There.

Mrs. Swellery—"What is the matter with my husband, doctor?"

Physician—"Appendicitis, madam."

Mrs. S.—"I am so glad; I was afraid he might have something unfashionable."

The doctor—My dear friend, you must give up drinking.

Patient—But, doctor, I never drink a drop.

The doctor—Then, you must give up smoking.

Patient—But I don't smoke at all.

The doctor—Well, if you have no bad habit to give up, I am afraid I cannot help you. (Flegende Blatser).

A lady living on Cass avenue heard a knock at the side door and opened it. A tramp stood there, who doffed his cap.

"Sweet lady," he began, when she sternly interrupted him.

"How dare you address me in that manner?"

"I humbly beg pardon," he said; "it was all owing to a habit I have acquired of speaking my thoughts aloud."

He got two kinds of pie and some dough-nuts.—Detroit Free Press.

The Potato Bug and his wife walked for a time in silence.

"My dear," she remarked at last, taking cognizance of his air of abstraction, "you seem constrained since the bureau of entomology discovered that we belonged to that distinguished foreign family with the ancient name. Are you not glad?"

The eyes of the Doryphora Lineata swam with tears.

"Noblesse oblige," was all he said, and turned away.—Detroit Tribune.

"You will have to give me another room," said a visitor to the hotel manager.

"What's the matter? Aren't you comfortable where you are?"

"Well, not exactly. That German musician in the next room and I don't get along well. Last night he tooted away on his clarinet so that I thought I would never get to sleep. After I had caught a few winks I was awakened by a pounding on my door."

"What's the matter?" I asked. "Of you please," said the German, "dot you would schmore of der same key. You was go from B flat to G, und it schpools der moosic!" —Harlem Life.

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