

ALL SHORT OF WIND.

NOT A MAN IN TOWN COULD BLOW UP TO SEVEN POUNDS.

Pap Perkins, the Postmaster of Jericho, Tells About the Meeting Which Discussed the Advantages of Starting a Brass Band.

[Copyright, 1903, by C. B. Lewis.] "Look here, pap," said Squar Johnson as he dropped into the postoffice one day when I was alone. "I've got a scheme on hand that'll do more to boost the town of Jericho to the top of the ladder than 40 miles of new sidewalk. Yes, sir, it's a boomer, and if it's carried out you'll see the price of real estate jump 50 per cent."

He waited for me to get my breath and then lowered his voice and continued: "Pap, I've got a notice written out for all patriotic citizens of Jericho to assemble at the postoffice this evening, and I'll post her up on the door. I want to spring it on 'em all of a sudden. I want to see 'em turn pale and their hair stand up. Jest say to all inquirers, pap, that Jericho is comin' right to the front like a steer goin' for a cornfield."

I wanted to know what the scheme was, but the squar winked and nodded and looked mysterious and went off



BLEW OFF HIS NOSE.

without givin his secret away. There was a great deal of curiosity during the day. Some thought the squar had a balloon ascension in view in order to attract public attention to our new cooper shop, and others had it that he had found a way to dodge the state tax, but it was all guesswork. There was a tremendous crowd on hand when evenin came, and the squar went around rubbin his hands together and smilin all over his face. When he had got the crowd worked up to the pitch where everybody wanted to die fur liberty, he called the meetin to order and said:

"Feller freemen of Jericho, we hev here a beautiful town, a salubrious climate and a populashun to be proud of. We hev the best of water, the lowest of taxes and skandy any use fur doctors. We hev the telephone, electric doorbells and a town pump. A stranger would look around him and say we needed nuthin else. But we do, and that is why I hev called you together here tonight. We need jest one thing more to put Jericho on the pinnacle, and that is a brass band."

"By John, but he's made a p'int!" said Deacon Spooner as he whacked on the counter with his cane. "Yes, sir, Jericho needs a brass band to boost her, and I'm with the squar. Let us hear what Moses Hopkins has to say about it."

"As I take it," said Moses, "a brass band plays tunes, and I'd like to know in advance what sort of tunes this band is goin to play. If it's goin to play 'The Sweet By and By,' then I'm in fur a band. If it's goin to play liddle-diddle tunes, then I'm ag'in it."

"That's a p'int as fur as it goes," said the deacon, "but it don't go fur 'nuff. Enos Williams, you was in the hog buyin bizness fur 20 years, and you ought to know about brass bands. What'd you think of the idea?"

"That depends," said Enos. "I don't go much on a brass band that toots its wind all over town and wastes it on the air. If we had a band that would come down to the depot to meet me as I come in from Tarrytown, I think I'd kind of like it."

"By John, but he's right, and he's made a p'int!" shouted the deacon. "I don't see the p'int," said Squar Johnson as he colored up. "Why should our brass band go down to the depot to welcome a man who hain't never done anything in particular fur Jericho? Enos is a good 'nuff man in his way, but did the outside world ever hear of him? Was he consulted about buildin the new sewer or paintin the town hall? Has he ever laid awake nights thinkin how this town could be boosted to the top?"

"Enos, he's knocked your p'int out and made one ag'in you," said the deacon, "but we'll hear from some of the rest. How is it with you, Jabez Fowler?"

"I can't exactly say till I know what the band is goin to do," replied Jabez. "My old woman is mighty fond of brass band tunes which lift up the heels, and if the band'll come over to my house three times a week and give us sunthin lively I'll chip in."

"Mebbe I'm mistaken in this crowd," said the squar as he looked around in a serious way. "Mebbe this is a crowd composed of freeborn Americans whose forefathers fought at Bunker Hill, and mebbe it's made up of men who'd steal the statue of Liberty and sell it fur a junk. To say that I am astonished does not half express my feelin's."

In his humble way, "if he expects that hand to meet him at the depot when he comes home?"

"Behn I hold the postishun I do," answered the squar, "bein I'm referred to as the leadin man in Jericho, if the band wanted to go down and see me off or wanted to be there to welcome me home I don't reckon anybody would find fault."

"But I'd want the same thing," said Ebenezer Scott. "I ain't no justice of the peace, but my dairy is milkin 28 rows this summer, and I feel I'm as big as anybody. I go over to Dobbs Ferry once in two weeks, and I should want that band to toot me off and toot me home ag'in."

"There may be a p'int," said the deacon as he scratched his ear, "but I don't stassey see it. Mebbe the squar wants to say sunthin further about liberty and Bunker Hill?"

"I'm sayin," replied the squar as he heaved a long sigh, "that patriotism and love of country seems to be leader in a dornal in these United States. Mebbe there's a man in this crowd aside from me who'd be willin to shed his blood that our glorious republic might be saved from ruin and desolashun, but if that be I can't name him. You might as well disperse to your homes and tell your wives and children that Jericho is doomed."

"By John, but what a p'int—what a p'int!" whispered the deacon. "Before we bust up and go to ruin, however, I'd like to hear from Reuben White. Reuben's bin as far west as Detroit, and he ought to know what influence a brass band has on a town."

"The influence of a brass band is accordin to the leader," said Reuben. "I've seen 'em where they jumped a town right to the front in four weeks, and I've seen 'em where they killed things dead in two. The leader wants to be a peccoliar sort of a man. He wants to be born fur the place, same as Washington was. He wants to be ready to die at two minits' notice or to live fur a hundred years."

"And mebbe you think you're that man?" queried the squar as he pounded on the counter with his fist.

"I do. I know I am. I'm the only man in Jericho as kin lead a band to success and make the town hump herself. I'm a self sacrificin critter, as you all know, and if this meetin thinks best—"

But the meetin shouted him down, and it was five minits before Deacon Spooner could make his voice heard, and then he said:

"There's more p'int's bobbin up here than you kin shake a stick at, and we might as well hev one more. Sposin we hear from Lish Billings. He's the only man in Jericho who kin play an accordion. What'd you say, Lish?"

"There's mighty little to be said and nuthin to bust up the country," answered Lish. "Do any of you sons of Bunker Hill know how much wind it takes to blow a brass horn?"

Nobody did, and a hush fell upon the crowd.

"It takes ten pounds, reckoned by a lung tester," said Lish, "and you'd want an extra pound fur walkin up hill. There was a lung tester man in town two weeks ago, and every son of us handed over a nickel and took a blow. We blowed and strained and blowed, and Rube White was one of 'em who blowed a sole off his foot, and yet no man reached seven pounds. What you goin to git your wind to blow them horns?"

There was a painful silence while you could count a hundred, and then Deacon Spooner said:

"By John, but I'm goin home and tell the old woman that I don't know beans when the bag's untied, and the rest of you'd better do the same thing!"

Playtime in the Senate. Senator Butler once had a bill appropriating \$5,000 to build a monument on the Moore's Creek battlefield, North Carolina, which was an especial object of Senator Wolcott's fun.

"Can the senator tell me the date of the battle?" he asked Mr. Butler.

"It was the first battle of the Revolution, 29 days before the battle of Lexington," was the reply.

"But cannot the senator tell me the day and the year?" persisted Mr. Wolcott.

Mr. Butler was stumped. "I can tell the senator tomorrow," he finally remarked.

"Then," replied Mr. Wolcott, "I will let my objection stand until tomorrow also."

A few minutes later Senator Wolcott relented, and Mr. Butler made another effort to get the appropriation agreed to. This time it was Senator Lodge who objected.

Mistakes in Christening. At Hamsbury Manor, England, there once resided a poulterer's family of the name of Duck. The third son was to be christened, and the mother wanted the name to be William. Just before starting for church the nurse ran up stairs to the father, who was laid up with gout, to tell him they were off.

"What he going to call us, nurse?" "Missus says it's to be William," was the reply. "William he blowed!" said the invalid. "Call us plain Bill!"

In accordance with these laconic instructions the nurse gave the name of Plainbill to the clergyman, and the infant was christened accordingly.

In an even funnier way is the queer Christian name of Mr. Otto Tichner of Peckham accounted for. When his parents and sponsors arrived at the church, his name had not been settled upon, and when the clergyman said, "Name this child," one of the friends said "John," and another said "Oh, no!" meaning not John, and, as no one else spoke, the clergyman thought that was to be his name and baptized him Otto. The full account of the baptism is contained in Blanck's "History of Camberwell."

A clergyman's son vouches for the following: "My father was baptizing a boy of 6 years of age. The names given were Benjamin Joseph. After the ceremony he said to the boy, 'You have two very good names, and you ought to be a good boy. How did you come by them?' 'Please, sir,' said the boy, 'we was twins, and the other died.'"

Easy For Him. "You understand, of course," pursued the lawyer, "what is meant by a 'preponderance of evidence?'"

"Yes, sir," replied the man whom he was examining with reference to his qualifications as a juror.

"Let me have your idea of it, if you please."

"I understand it, I tell you."

"Well, what is it?"

"Why, anybody can understand that."

"I would like to have your definition of it."

"I know what it is, all right. When I tell you I know what a thing is, I know it. That's all there is about that."

"Well, what was the question I asked you?"

"You ought to know what that was. If you've forgot your own questions, don't try to get me to remember them for you."

"I don't want to hear any more of that kind of talk," interposed the court. "Answer the questions addressed to you by the counsel."

"Judge, I did. He asked me if I knew what it was, and I said I did."

"Are you sure you understand what is meant by the term 'preponderance of evidence?'"

"Of course I am, judge."

"Well, let us hear your idea of it."

"It's evidence previously pondered."

—Chicago Tribune.

No Time to Waste. "I'm a business man," he said brusquely, "and I've no time to waste. I want to marry your daughter. Can I have her?"

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