

JANUARY, 1895

SHEEP THAT PASSED IN THE NIGHT.*

A Tale of Wool From the Records of a Justice of the Peace

(Literally founded on an actual trial in Yellow Medicine County.)

STATE OF MINNESOTA,

YELLOW MEDICINE COUNTY,
Justice Court.

WORSE

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OLE BUMQUIST.

FRITZ LOOMPENGLE.

Justice of the Peace.

A complain having ben dooly fiel in my courts on the tirtieth days of Octembar, 18 and 94, by Knut Haltmastersen, that ONE Fritz Loompbengle in the dark nitetime of the 29 of Octembar, did tack, steel and hustle away out of the proceshion of the sade Knut the First of the parties. Two (2) sheaps worth Five dolars, and refuse to giv them back, a warrent was ishood accordan to Law, and the sade Fritz Loompbengle wur arestid down near Swillwaller Kreak shootin of snipes and peeweas, and brought before me, when he plead "aint gilty," and stand there fer trile.

Knute the first then swear that tose two sheaps in dispoot wur hisn, bekause he swapped a barl of Sourkrout and one femail Hen to Isidoor Monkdogsky, whats livin at Hanley Falls, for the old sheap, and the young sheap was the old ones young one by Halfmastersons own nowledge and on intermashun and beleef. Knut the One also

* MLHP: Though reformatted, this article is complete. It originally was printed in italics. The author's punctuation and spelling are not changed. The name of the satirist—"H. W. W."—is not known.

swear he kut a ear off the old sheap when he bought him, and he sade he hev it in his vest.

(By the Court)—On the courts deman, the plaintuff puts the ear in evidents. Ear in evidents. This court purceeds by taken a resess for 20 minits

Mrs. Sven Ganderson, sworn and testerfies:

“I seed mister Halfmastersen brang them sheaps to my place bout 2 year ago last Aegoost. Well, ai tank ai kan: ai kan pick those sheaps out of a flock ef ai wur sober—and ef ai wasn’t ai tank ai kould pick out more too.” (Here the court cried: “Less order, here; less order!”)

“Yes, one sheap hev loosed som of his ear. I kould tell dem sheap anywhear I met him—here oder in the old country. Yes, aim marrid and hev 7 of my own. Dem sheaps wur put inter our yard evry nite by the haystack. No, I didden seed Mr. Loomphengle grab dem sheaps and runaway, but when they wur gone and he show up mit a shephide koat, I recknize mister Halfmastersens sheaps. Yes, dem sheaps wur cheep at haf the price.”

Plaintuff rested.

Fritz Loompbengle, sworn in his own defends.
(In the witness’ own language)

“Dot sheps ist mine! I raise dot old shep und dot old shep raise dot lamp. We wuz lif togedder been nearly two yahr. Dot ear what Mr. Halfmasterson show you belongs to his wife; it aint kum from dose shep. Mine shep is marked mit a raide hot poker on der face. I could tole you dot sheps face if I meet him under water, by jimmy! He eat me up one acre of tomatoes latz year, and I no can forget dot shep. Dot shep is mine und I bet you on it!”

Case closed.

Among other choice things, this learned Court said:

“This yar been a woolly case. They been plenta of yarn in ut. The parties disagree perfectly. The dispoot about the sheaps ear could hev been easy settled ef plaintiff had stuck his wife in evidents. But he didunt. He kept her to home, away from the edgerkashunal influence of the court. Besides, cutting a sheap from his ear is cruelty to animuls; cause if they aint hev their ear how are they going to hear the sweet silents of the woots, or see the wind roar, or smell the beauty of natcher—that is, I say, if they are substracted of a ear.

“The defenden is yust so guilty. He testerfies he raised these sheaps. I dont know if he used his foot, or a pitchfork: anyway it is a sin to kick a sheap behind his face. Then he sade something about a red hot poker. They wur no such weapin in evidents, and this testimony is wholly immarelevant and competint, and it must be struck out of my own motion, without costs to either party. He sade he could tell that sheap if he met him under water. If the defenden intends to intermate that his face is familiar enough with water for that, his whole testimony must be disregarded, for his own face wur before the court and careful joodishul notice wur taken thereof. As for that cheap eatin’ a acre of termaters, the court knows better; he has raised sheaps and termaters, and he has ate them all his life—canned, stewed & raw.

“As conclusion of Law, the Court finds it cant decide this case till spring.

“OLE BUMQUIST, Justice of the Peace.”

—*H.W.W.*



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