

BLACK JOHN

By Q. UNDERWOOD.

There was not an atom of vice in Black John, but he was a fearsome beast for a weak-armed rider who did not understand his idiosyncrasies.

Trained to "go against the bit" by the heavy-handed village blacksmith from whom Casper Carson bought him, he had a mouth like gutta percha, and jaw muscles like steel ropes.

Nannie Carson rode him frequently and sometimes to the discomfiture of her escort, who, mounted on a horse of ordinary speed, found it difficult to keep her in sight.

It was probably admiration of Miss Carson's prowess as a horsewoman and a desire to emulate it that induced Miss Lackland to accept Jasper Carson's offer to teach her to ride.

The riding lesson was given in the early morning, in order that the censorious might not see and deride Miss Lackland's inexperience.

But Jasper Carson had something in his heart to say to Miss Lackland, and he had promised himself to say it during one of these delightful rides. It would be so easy, he thought, to ease his soul of its burden while riding by her side. When the morning came he found the brave resolutions of the night before had vanished.

"Mayn't I ride Black John tomorrow, Mr. Carson?" said Miss Lackland, after her sixth lesson. "Your sister, Nannie, says he is perfectly safe if you are along."

"Certainly you may," said Jasper Carson, flushing with pride.

So it was that when Jasper Carson rang the bell at the Lackland home that golden morning, Black John bore a sidesaddle.

"Isn't he the dearest thing?" said Miss Lackland, as they cantered along the river road which was overhung with locust trees.

"He's a good old horse," said Jasper Carson. "Hold your reins a trifle lower, Miss Lackland. There, that's right."

"I'm so glad I have learned to ride," she said.

Jasper Carson tried to say: "Won't you ride through life with me?"

Before he could speak, a ragged urchin jumped from a tree, and shrieked: "Yah! Yah!"

Black John's nerves were as invulnerable as his mouth, and he merely pricked his ears in disapproval, but the mare Carson rode was sensitive. She plunged forward in a mad effort to bolt, and Miss Lackland, watching with alarm and admiration, Carson's skilled management, increased the pressure on Black John's bit. The horse accepted this as a signal to change his gait, and responded with cheerful alacrity.

Jasper Carson grasped the situation instantly and a cold chill struck to his heart. So long as the girl retained her presence of mind there was little danger of her falling off, but as she simply sat still and pulled on the bit, Black John would turn from the road into a bridle-path that led back home and his rider would almost certainly be swept out of the saddle by the limb of a tree.

Driving his spurs deep into the sides of his mare, Carson gave chase. The mare had a strain of hunting blood in her and a good burst of speed, but Black John was 200 yards in front when she got her stride, and the bridle path was not more than a quarter of a mile away.

As Black John swept around a curve in the road, Carson lost sight of him and his fair rider. It was only 200 yards now to the bridle-path, and the single-footer had a lead of nearly one-fourth that distance.

Urging the mare with heel, hand and voice, Jasper Carson dashed on, cursing and praying in turn. He fancied himself standing by Miss Lackland's corpse, and wondered could he live after that.

When Black John turned into the bridle path the mare's lean brown head was at his flank.

"Whoo, John!" shouted Carson. But John felt the pull at the bit, and hearing the clatter of the mare's hoofs, thought it was a race, and put on a little more steam.

Miss Lackland's wrists ached, and she was frightened too badly to heed Carson's prayers to her to drop the reins.

Jasper Carson cursed aloud in his agony when he saw, 50 feet in front of Black John, the thick limb of a tree barely high enough for a crouching horseman to pass under. If Miss Lackland struck the limb, it meant death.

She saw it, too, and bent low in her saddle. As she crouched she loosed her hold on the reins.

"Whoo, John!" shouted Carson, pulling up so suddenly that his mare slid forward on her haunches.

Black John heard the command at the instant the pressure on the bit was released, and stopped in his most abrupt style. His head had passed under the bough.

Miss Lackland plunged forward, and would have gone over Black John's head but for a friendly snag that caught her hair and jerked her back.

Jasper Carson ran up and lifted her from the horse.

"Speak to me, my darling," he said. "Are you hurt? Speak, please. I love you so dearly."

Miss Lackland nestled her head close to Jasper Carson's shoulder, looked at him with a half shy, half triumphant smile, and whispered: "I am so glad you let me ride Black John."

SPRING NORMAL FOR TEACHERS.

Two Courses to be Given County Teachers in April and May.

The Laurens County Board of Education offers those who are thinking of taking the teachers examination in May an opportunity to take a short preparatory course for two weeks before the examination. Miss Workman, the normal teacher at Laurens, will review any subjects which those who wish to take the examination, desire to review. The only requisite is that those taking this work come regularly and stay at work from nine until two. The subjects to be studied will be decided after the teachers have registered. There are no charges and board can be secured by writing ahead. This course will begin on April the 22nd and end on Friday?

For those teachers who want their certificates renewed, the County Board of Education also offers a four weeks course beginning Monday, May 13th, and ending June the 7th. Those teachers who complete this four-weeks course satisfactorily may have their certificates renewed without a county examination. Any teacher wishing to refresh her methods may take this course.

Miss Workman will teach primary methods and grammar grade methods in the state adopted courses of study and any subject that the teachers desire most. The program will probably be like the following:

- 9:00-9:15—Opening Exercises.
- 9:15-10:00—Primary Methods, Grammar Grade Teachers' Study Period
- 10:00-10:45—Grammar Grade Methods, Primary Teachers' Study Period.
- 10:45-11:30—English Grammar.
- 11:30-12:00—Recess.
- 12:00-12:30—Writing.
- 12:30-1:15—United States History.
- 1:15-2:00—Agriculture or Civics.

This program is not fixed and may be change at the request of the majority of the teachers.

Board can be secured at a very reasonable price, two in a room. Those

wishing to take this course will please write Miss Annie Workman as soon as possible. There will be no summer school.

JAS. H. SULLIVAN,
Supt. of Education.

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Pape's Diapepsin belongs in your home anyway. Should one of the family eat something which don't agree with them, or in case of an attack of indigestion, dyspepsia, gastritis or stomach derangement due to fermentation and acidity, at daytime or during the night, it is handy to give the quickest, surest relief known.

New Prospect Red Cross Auxiliary.

The ladies of the New Prospect Red Cross sent in their finished articles last week and received the deserved and appreciated O. K. (big O. and K. now), after inspection.

The ladies of the chapter met at the home of Mrs. John Brown, Tuesday afternoon and decided to have a box sup-

per at the school house Friday night before the 5th Sunday, March 29th, to which the public is cordially invited.

We hope at a very early date to be able to announce that a noted speaker will soon give us a lecture. The one with whom we are in correspondence, has seen service on the front and the lecture will be instructive, as well as interesting.

Come to the box supper the 29th and be on the lookout for the date of the lecture, possibly April 5th.

Mrs. J. A. Wofford,
Chairman of Publicity.

Engraved Cards and Invitations,
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Enough for a Party.
Gladys was visiting her aunt. One day, as they were going down town Gladys noticed three rather untidy children playing in front of a house and remarked about it. "There are ten children living in that house and only one mother to care for all of them, so she cannot always keep them as clean as mothers who have only one or two to care for," said her aunt. "Ten?" asked Gladys. "Ten? Why, they can have a party without inviting anyone."

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