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Dieffenbach on the Bull

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"Was hut der John gawdt?
 (What did John say?)

In the olden times the preacher would live on a small farm, provided by his congregation, and it was located close to the Church, at the end of the village. A certain preacher had several cows, and he had no bull; but he had a hired boy of about fourteen years of age. A near-by farmer had a big bull, and he charged half a dollar for breeding a cow. But the preacher, being close-fisted with his cash, failed to send the required fee along with the boy, when he took a cow over to have her bred.

One Sunday morning the last cow to be bred was ready. The boy told the preacher: "Porra, de cow iss shteerich!" (Parson, the cow is in heat!)

The preacher said he should take her to the neighbor, and have her bred; then he could put her with the other cows in the field, and could come to the Church. "Ilo konsht ols, nuch dale fun meinera breddich, haira". (You can still hear part of my sermon.)

So the boy took the cow over; the farmer was a shrewd man, and knowing how he never had been paid any service-fee, so he asked the boy if the preacher had sent any money along; the boy shook his head. "Well, mer doona's nuch desamohl, oover no muss er ols geldt mett shticka, udder er muss eppes shunshA do". (Well, well do it once more, but the next

time he must send some money along, or do something else.) So they let the bull with the cow, and he did a rushing job of it. The boy put the cow in the field, and ran over to the church. He found a vacant seat up in the gallery. Just as soon as he sat down, the preacher, who was explaining about John in the Bible, said: "Uw was hut der John gsaadt?" The boy, not knowing what he meant by the question, and being uncertain as to what he should do, remained quiet; but he thought that the preacher was referring to the farmer, who had the bull.

The preacher, like preachers will, hemmed and hawed a bit, and clearing his throat, he repeated in a loud voice, and looking direct by at the uneasy boy: "Uw was hut der John gsaadt?" (And what did John say?)

The boy summoned up all his courage. He got up on his feet, looked down at the preacher and he said: "Der John hut gsaadt os won do des maigcht mohel keu holwa-dawler mitt slicka daitscht, us kemscht do die perdommtig oldty cow selwert fuchsah" (John said that if you didn't send a half a dollar along the next time you could fuck your damned old cow yourself.)

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Uw dort remnt er in neis. (And there he rammed it in.)

This tale was told to me by George Swope, an old farmer, living near the hamlet called Hamling, just across the county-line. George's farm, however was on this side of the line. He was a tall, rugged old man, straight, and he had a keen eye. He was freckled and had reddish sideburns - just little crinkly tufts in front of his ears, down to the jaw, but not extending along the jaw-bone. And he had a twangy, nasal tone - "er hut so holwer darrieh de naws-gsch-weltst." (He kind of talked through his nose.)

I spent several pleasant hours there on a bleak Winter's day, some forty years ago, while scouring that section for orders for trees, etc.

George related what had happened near the old Klopp's church at the nearby village one Sunday forenoon while he was still a younger man. He could not remember the name of the preacher, he said. But a farmer had a herd of cattle in a field adjoining the church, and one of the cows was in heat, "see traww shteerich", old George said.

The preacher was holding forth about Daniel in the lion's den; he would look with one eye in the Bible, and with the other he would watch the bull. "Uw er hut seller bull ferdonmt feel besser ge-watscht as we sei test!" (And he watched that bull a damned lot better than his text.) The preacher was going from one phase of his theme to the other. "Er isse

few minutes, ew ownerä (he went from one to the other) George said - "Tus grandt so is der bull" (And just so did the bull)

When the bull smelled at the cow's rear end, the preacher slid his hand into his pants-pocket - "in sei hussa-sock". "Ich denk er hat ew nummer Xova!" (I think he held it down.)

When the bull tried, unsuccessfully to mount the cow, the preacher was stamping up and down with both feet. He was preaching in German.

"We er on der cow era desche garuchen hut, (when the bull smelled at the cow's vagina) the preacher coughed and spluttered. When he licked it, the preacher cried out in a loud voice - "Oh do Gott!" (Oh, my God!)

"The boys up in the gallery were all watching that bull, but one of the deacons - "ainer fun da fore-shtajer", was also watching very closely", said George. So when the preacher noticed that the folks had seen him watching that bull, he added to his exhortation: "So os meer grefta greega keumas, Oh Gott! So os meer awe so do keumas!" (So we will get strength, Oh God! (the bull turns his nose up in the air and makes an awful face) so that we too can do like he (meaning Daniel) did!) Some of the audience were by that time almost unable to control their amusement; and more than one of the women could be seen watching the loving

- match on the outside.

The preacher, (perhaps silently calling for divine aid) kept explaining the sermon, telling of this king's trial of David, and his accusations, and so on and on, meanwhile the bull kept on with his wooing. And just as the preacher led the sermon up to the climax, so did the bull.

The preacher explained about the lion's den, and of the guards who held Daniel by the arms, and when they had opened the door and the king was ready to throw Daniel in unto the lions, up jumped the bull, and rammed that long red rod into the unresisting cow.

"Uu now hut er in nei-garamut," (And now he rammed it in) the preacher hollered and almost jumped up in the air. And the deacon, who had been paying much more attention to the bull than to the sermon for the last five minutes hollered out: "Weller?" - (Which one?)

George said that brought down the house. He said the boys, and some of the older men laughed out loud. The women hid their blushes behind fans, hymn-books and some just sat there, their faces as red as a beet, and howled out loud with the fun of it. The preacher realizing the predicament closed the Bible and led the congregation in singing the Doxology. "Owmer's waura ferdommt feel mainewon lachaw we om singai." (But there were a damned lot

more were laughing than singing) said the old man. He added. "Ja, des iss net usht en story - des iss gshayer grandt doe humor on der karrich" (Yes, this is it just a story - this happened right up here at the church.

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