but I did not ask you to drive it into my house. If I must have it anywhere on the premises I prefer the garden to the morning-room."

"Cattle drives are not in my line," said Eshley; "if I remember I told you so at the outset." "I quite agree," retorted the lady, "painting pretty pictures of pretty little cows is what you're suited for. Perhaps you'd like to do a nice sketch of that ox making itself at home in my morning-room?"

This time it seemed as if the worm had turned; Eshley began striding away.

"Where are you going?" screamed Adela.

"To fetch implements," was the answer.

"Implements? I won't have you use a lasso. The room will be wrecked if there's a struggle."

But the artist marched out of the garden. In a couple of minutes he returned, laden with easel, sketching-stool, and painting materials.

"Do you mean to say that you're going to sit quietly down and paint that brute while it's destroying my morning-room?" gasped Adela.

"It was your suggestion," said Eshley, setting his canvas in position.

The Stalled Ox

Saki (H H Munro)

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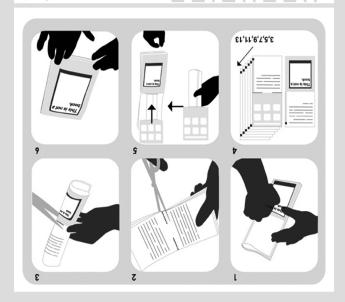
asked you to drive that beast out of my garden, "Mr. Eshley," said Adela in a shaking voice, "I

choice of surroundings. discontinued his attempt to interfere with its eyes, a look that counselled respect. He beginnings of a hunted look had come into its operations; all the same, Eshley fancied that the in vases, and the animal resumed its browsing and other autumn herbage stood about the room into the morning-room. Some chrysanthemums pushed its way through the open French window the charitable called the croquet lawn, and real hesitation, it crossed the tiny strip of turf that lumbering trot. With an air of inquiry, but with no succeeded in quickening its pace from a walk to a ran to head it towards the gate, but only been, and strode swiftly up the garden. Eshley pluck at the bed where the chrysanthemums had once that it was to go; it gave a hurried final another pea-stick. The ox seemed to realise at Eshley ventured on another javelin exercise with neither lowered its head nor stamped its feet obvious hostility at the same focus. As the beast Adela gazed with equal concentration and more with concentrated inquiry at the stick-thrower. suspended for a long moment, while the ox gazed

"Noontide Peace," a study of two dun cows under begun, so, of necessity, he went on. His picturesquely under walnut trees, and as he had acceptable picture of cattle drowsing its children. Eshley had painted a successful and Academy encourages orderly, methodical habits in the walls of its Summer Exhibition. The Royal Royal Academy had duly exposed the same on and meadow-grass and filtered sunbeam, and the reposeful milch-cows in a setting of walnut tree conceived and executed a dainty picture of two patches on their mouse-sleek coats. Eshley had walnut trees, with the sunlight falling in dappled meadow-grass under the shade of a group of summertime the cows stood knee-deep in tall of the Channel Island persuasion. At noonday in neighbour pastured some small picturesque cows picturesque meadow, in which an enterprising one side of his garden there abutted a small, just escaped the reproach of being suburban. On was in a park-like, villa-dotted district that only hoof, milking-stool, and branding-iron. His home farm, in an atmosphere pervaded with horn and be supposed that he lived on a ranche or a dairy cattle painter by force of environment. It is not to Theophil Eshley was an artist by profession, a

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The Stalled Ox Saki (H H Munro)

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a walnut tree, was followed by "A Mid-day Sanctuary," a study of a walnut tree, with two dun cows under it. In due succession there came "Where the Gad-Flies Cease from Troubling," "The Haven of the Herd," and "A-dream in Dairyland," studies of walnut trees and dun cows. His two attempts to break away from his own tradition were signal failures: "Turtle Doves alarmed by Sparrow-hawk" and "Wolves on the Roman Campagna" came back to his studio in the guise of abominable heresies, and Eshley climbed back into grace and the public gaze with "A Shaded Nook where Drowsy Milkers Dream."

On a fine afternoon in late autumn he was putting some finishing touches to a study of meadow weeds when his neighbour, Adela Pingsford, assailed the outer door of his studio with loud peremptory knockings.

"There is an ox in my garden," she announced, in explanation of the tempestuous intrusion.

"An ox," said Eshley blankly, and rather fatuously; "what kind of ox?"

"Oh, I don't know what kind," snapped the lady.
"A common or garden ox, to use the slang
expression. It is the garden part of it that I object

Transcribed from the 1914 John Lane, The Bodley Head edition by David Price, ccx074@coventry.ac.uk

Eshley presented Adela Pingsford with a new copy of "Israel Kalisch," and a couple of finely flowering plants of Madame Andre Blusset, but nothing in the nature of a real reconciliation has taken place between them.

"If it was anxious to go," said Adela Pingsford rather angrily, "I should not have come here to chat with you about it. I'm practically all alone; the housemaid is having her afternoon out and the cook is lying down with an attack of neuralgia. Anything that I may have learned at school or in after life about how to remove a large ox from a small garden seems to have escaped from my memory now. All I could think of was that you memory now. All I could think of was that you subjects that you presumably more or less familiar with the subjects that you painted, and that you might be subjects that you painted, and that you might be of some slight assistance. Possibly I was

"Won't it go?" said Eshley.

"I imagine it came in by the gate," said the lady impatiently; "it couldn't have climbed the walls, and I don't suppose anyone dropped it from an aeroplane as a Bovril advertisement. The immediately important question is not how it got in, but how to get it out."

"How did it get into the garden?" asked Eshley.

to. My garden has just been put straight for the winter, and an ox roaming about in it won't improve matters. Besides, there are the chrysanthemums just coming into flower."

"I shall go to the Public Library and get them to telephone for the police," announced Adela, and, raging audibly, she departed.

Some minutes later the ox, awakening probably to the suspicion that oil cake and chopped mangold was waiting for it in some appointed byre, stepped with much precaution out of the morning-room, stared with grave inquiry at the no longer obtrusive and pea-stick-throwing human, and then lumbered heavily but swiftly out of the garden. Eshley packed up his tools and followed the animal's example and "Larkdene" was left to neuralgia and the cook.

The episode was the turning-point in Eshley's artistic career. His remarkable picture, "Ox in a morning-room, late autumn," was one of the sensations and successes of the next Paris Salon, and when it was subsequently exhibited at Munich it was bought by the Bavarian Government, in the teeth of the spirited bidding of three meat-extract firms. From that moment his success was continuous and assured, and the Royal Academy was thankful, two years later, to give a conspicuous position on its walls to his large canvas "Barbary Apes Wrecking a Boudoir."

ingredients for the proverb ready to hand." stalled ox where hate is.' We seem to have all the something about 'better a dinner of herbs than a "I forget how the proverb runs," he observed; "of

creeper leaves as an inducement to continue the promptly flung it some bunches of Virginia quarters. Eshley noticed its restlessness and be thinking of leaving its rather restricted and the cover of "Israel Kalisch," and appeared to to go mad. The ox had finished the vase-flowers moment later it was Adela herself who appeared The man is mad!" exclaimed Adela tragically. A

principle of people in our station of life." Consideration for others should be the guiding merciful sleep and your outcry will waken her. said Eshley; "she may be just dozing off into a "You seem to forget that the cook has neuralgia,"

eating my flowers," came the raging retort. "You seem to forget that it's in my morning-room,

that it's your ox, even by adoption." matter," said the artist; "you can hardly pretend "I don't see what standing you have in the

"I forbid it; I absolutely forbid it!" stormed Adela.

mistaken."

"I paint dairy cows, certainly," admitted Eshley, "but I cannot claim to have had any experience in rounding-up stray oxen. I've seen it done on a cinema film, of course, but there were always horses and lots of other accessories; besides, one never knows how much of those pictures are

Adela Pingsford said nothing, but led the way to her garden. It was normally a fair-sized garden, but it looked small in comparison with the ox, a huge mottled brute, dull red about the head and shoulders, passing to dirty white on the flanks and hind-quarters, with shaggy ears and large blood-shot eyes. It bore about as much resemblance to the dainty paddock heifers that Eshley was accustomed to paint as the chief of a Kurdish nomad clan would to a Japanese tea-shop girl. Eshley stood very near the gate while he studied the animal's appearance and demeanour. Adela Pingsford continued to say nothing.

"It's eating a chrysanthemum," said Eshley at last, when the silence had become unbearable.

"How observant you are," said Adela bitterly. "You seem to notice everything. As a matter of fact, it

Mademoiselle Louise Bichot into a petal salad was animal's mottled flanks. The operation of mashing and flung it with some determination against the feet nearer to the ox. He picked up a pea-stick language that sent the artist instinctively a few The icy calm broke down; Adela Pingsford used

mind telling you that this is an Ayrshire ox." of the chrysanthemum," said Eshley, "I don't "Since you have been so frank about the variety

munching mouth.

glowing orange head was crushed into the huge he's begun on now," she added in icy calm, as a away? That is a Mademoiselle Louise Bichot that Meanwhile, do you mind trying to drive that ox frighten them out. You 'shoo' beautifully. said Adela, "I should certainly send for you to "If any hens should ever stray into my garden,"

of the fact. the ox heard them it gave no outward indication made noises of the "Hish" and "Shoo" variety. If direction of the animal, clapped his hands, and imperative. Eshley took a step or two in the The necessity for doing something was becoming

present moment." has got six chrysanthemums in its mouth at the