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Limber Johnson's Getaway

by Clay Perry

LIMBER JOHNSON, the Swede, was wanted badly by Sheriff Queen of Swango County.

The sheriff spent a whole weary month, in the winter preceding the famous highwater spring of 18— chasing Limber through the big woods. It was a hard winter, too; the snow lay six to seven feet deep in the hemlock forest, from the headwaters of the Swango River, in the black earth country, to the first falls of the series known as Swango Steps. Through lumber-camp after lumber-camp the sheriff trailed his man, sometimes on snow-shoes, sometimes on skis and, for some distance, on skates.

Sheriff Queen came back to Swango, late in February, empty-handed, with frost-nipped fingers, toes, and face. But he nursed a burning heart. That inner warmth had kept him alive in his long chase.

"He'll come back to Swango, in the spring," the sheriff declared, when he filed his report with Hicks Runyon, county attorney. "Limber can't stay long away from the only open bar in Swango County."

"Won't he beat it away for the border?" asked Runyon. "Or isn't he wise enough?"

"He's too wise," replied Sheriff Queen. "He knows he can't get across the line to Canada, with all the roads and bridges watched, and as for swinging round the west end of the lake, through Duluth—"

"Hardly," nodded Runyon. "That's the best dragnet in the Northwest."

"I've got a pretty good idea where he is, right now," added the sheriff. "He isn't working, just now; he's loafing in some trapper's cabin, paying for his board with booze. But I don't want to spend the whole blamed winter in the mucky swamps of the black earth district. I've got more work ahead of me than I can do before the April sitting."

"I'd like to have Limber here for the grand jury," observed Runyon. "But I know you've done all a man could, this winter," he added.

"You need that case before election, eh?" observed the sheriff, keenly. His smile wrinkled his frost-bitten cheeks into puckered mounds of flesh.

"I'd like to have it, Bill. I don't say that I need it. But you know the feeling, about Limber Johnson, as well as I do. He has been the bad man of the timber country for so long that I'd like to put him where he belongs—now that we've got a big enough and fresh enough charge against him."

"I think he'll come back," insisted the sheriff, doggedly. "The spring drive starts in early April, you know, at the latest. I look for him then."

"The grand jury sits the first Monday after the first Tuesday."

"Which is, it happens, pretty nearly the middle of the month," said Sheriff Queen, turning to a calendar. "The thirteenth."

"Yes, and they'll be in session three days. There's a bare chance—if Limber joins the drive and it comes through fast."

"Hmum! It will come through fast enough!" exclaimed Sheriff Queen. "There's snow enough in the woods to shoot the biggest drive that ever started from the black earth country down to the bottom of Swango Steps without a chance of a jam. Jimson Rand is in charge. You know Rand."

"Dynamite Rand. Yes."

"He's got enough of his favorite jam-breaking explosive with him to blow the bottom out of the river from here to the east branch. He'll bring the drive through, double-quick."

Limber Johnson was charged with manslaughter. It might have been murder, but the coroner had been in doubt. Charley Legro, the victim, a wizen Canadian river-man, was so full of bad whisky when the fight that ended his career occurred that there was doubt as to how much poor heart action had to do with his death. There was no doubt Limber had hit Legro, with a huge fist, under the left ear. On the other hand, Charley Legro, in his younger days, was known as the most dangerous *lasher*, in a fight, the Swango River had.

His tactics were vicious and simple. In a barroom scuffle he scorned fists or chairs or bottles as weapons. His calked boots were his mainstay. He used the hitch-kick trick—two steps across the floor, a leap in air, one foot going up, the other following like the blade of a pair of shears. Then, in mid air, the second foot swung violently in a sidewise swipe against the head of Charley's opponent.

But Charley was an old man, when he met Limber Johnson—and death. He was old from dissipation, not from years. Some witnesses swore Charley tried the *lash* on Limber—and it failed. But Charley died, a week after Limber hit him—and Limber was accused of being a man-slayer.

Mid March brought to Swango the first wave of the swift spring thaw. The town was built up and down the steep banks that formed the cut in which were the seven "steps" over which the river leaped to a lower level. Across the stream, high above it, stretched the spans of the new State bridge, built on steel piles sunk in the river-bottom. Five hundred yards below it the river roared through a narrow flume, and the overflow went over the dam, built at an angle out from the south bank, to intercept the flow and direct it into the mill-race of the Swango pulp-mill. Fifteen feet from the north bank of the river the dam stopped and here was the sluice-gate. Through that chute the logs must run, those that went on down-river for pulp-mills and sawmills below Swango. The April drive was to go through. Later came the hemlock and spruce for the Swango pulp-mill and cedar for the shingle-mill, above the bridge.

The water-gage at the sluice-gate showed a rise of three feet on March 24. On each succeeding day until the April rains began the water, went six inches higher. Old-timers told of the days—way back in 1871, when there was a bigger head of water—but in those days there was no dam, no sluice-gate. The river ran free, except for the trickle caught by the shingle-mill race, higher up. It surged down across the table-rocks which now formed the base of the dam.

The first problem of the river-men at Swango, expert boom-men and drivers, held at home by the Swango Pulp Company for this annual emergency, was to get the ice floes

through the sluice-gate without a pile-up. This spring it became a doubly dangerous task. Angle-booms built out between piers Nos. 4, 5, 6, and 7 of the State bridge, their points up-stream, were torn from their fastenings. The ice piled up against the steel cylinders, in great cakes which the angle-booms had been set to break, and failed. A never-ceasing, grinding, humming song was sung, by the thrust of ice against steel—but the bridge held. Pikemen labored day and night with long pike-poles and warded the ice around the piers—sometimes climbed down on the big floes and cracked them in two with axes. They got the ice through the gaps between the bridge-piers and through the sluice. The gate was drawn clear up above the crest of the smooth, oily flood that rushed through in thundering volume and leaped down over Swango Steps. Never before had this been necessary.

The drive was first heard from when the noise of a big blast came to the ears of the rivermen at the bridge, early in the morning of a sodden April day.

"Dynamite Rand's drive is coming!" This was the big news that went through town. The booms were prepared.

Swango pulp-mill squatted firmly on the bed-rock, below the dam, two floors beneath the level of the water that a strong stone dike helped hold back, at the extreme south end of the dam. Three more floors rose above it, and the tops of the huge pulp digesters poked through the roof higher up.

Sheriff Queen spent a great deal of time at the State bridge, pacing back and forth, watching the river, the sluice-gate and the dam. Bill Queen knew the Swango River as an old friend. He had once been a *bateau*-man, an expert with the V-shaped, oaken boats in which the river-hogs cut through the log-fields, hunt deadheads and tote grub from camp to camp. He knew that the river was a dangerous stream, now.

"Like an old lion, growling for meat," observed the sheriff, as he hung over the bridge-rail and watched the grinding ice floes. The cakes were three and four feet thick. They swirled and slammed and bumped and ground against the steel piers menacingly.

Sam True, a pikeman, patrolling the bridge, halted beside the sheriff, to spit over the rail and swear, mildly, about things in general.

"Some head of water, eh, for the drive!" he said.

"Right," replied Sheriff Queen. "How are things going?"

"Going by, so far," said Sam True, dropping his pike-pole with a clatter on the planks of the bridge. "But it's jest been luck, so far as I can see, that the bridge has held."

"Not just luck," corrected Sheriff Queen. "She's built to stand the racket. The engineers that built her studied the Swango River a bit."

"Yeah; they must have," Sam admitted dryly. "But the highest water-mark they knew anything about was covered up two feet deep yesterday. It'll be a foot more before night, I'll bet my hat."

"Think the bridge is likely to give anywhere?" inquired the sheriff, with sly sarcasm.

"Well, if you ask me, I'd say, 'No.' Not anywhere in particular. Everywhere's a danger spot, right now. You know how wide the current is."

Sheriff Queen's glance, for the hundredth time, swept the swollen expanse of the Swango, up-stream to where the first black line of second-growth timber, mostly oak and maple, jutted out on the point opposite the shingle-mill.

"Yes, I do," he said. "It's just about as wide as the river, itself, in normal times. But the channel begins to narrow down, just about under the bridge, here."

"In normal times, yeah," observed Sam. "But the channel's as wide as the whole river, now—the flood-channel. Hard to tell where the pull is the strongest. Right here, where we are standing, though, is the deepest—mebbe, the swiftest. See that swirl around the pier, there!"

He pointed down to where pier No. 5 bucked the current. The roily water curled up to a white crest as it sucked around the smooth bulwark.

"Pretty powerful," said Sheriff Queen uneasily.

"I ain't so much afeard of the ice," said Sam. "It's the snags that'll come with the jam I'm oneasy about."

Sheriff Queen nodded. Then he shook his head. He was uneasy, too.

The State bridge was built for a log-running river. The piers, smooth and round, gave the least chance for a jam to form about them. But the surface of the Swango River was nearer the flooring of the bridge than it had ever been before. When the first bunch of hemlock logs came tearing down atop the flood the water was four feet above the highest water-mark on the gauge at the sluice-gate.

Sheriff Queen had sent a runner upstream in a *bateau* long before the noise of the blast told the town that Dynamite Rand and his gang were near. The sheriff stayed in Swango because of the State bridge.

He was almost certain that Limber Johnson would come down with the first drive. Queen still had a lot of work ahead of him, but he stuck to the bridge-rail as if he were on vacation. He was held by the thrill of danger that the flooded river furnished.

"Dynamite Rand oughter held his jam right where it was till the flood went off," declared an old-timer wiseacre in the sheriff's ear.

"What for?" inquired Queen. "He's workin' under time-contract. Cant afford to hold back."

"Yeah, I know," replied the old man, pulling at a dead pipe, "but jest supposin' he shoots his timber into Swango clean across the river—and there's a pile-up at the bridge, here!"

"The booms and the river-hogs will take care of that," replied the sheriff, but he was not so sure about it as he appeared to be.

Below them, stretching up-stream, their lower ends lashed to piers Nos. 4 and 6, were long, heavy booms, made of hewn timbers two feet thick. The booms were double, lashed and spiked together. They opened like a huge V, with the bottom knocked out. This open V was the hopper into which the logs must run and shoot through, under the bridge, to the flume below.

The booms looked strong enough to stand any strain. They were anchored to shore, up-stream, with steel cables twisted around sturdy trees. Men with pike-poles and peaveys walked their length, on patrol, steel-caiked as to boot-soles, flannel-shirted, and with *stagged* trousers whose fringe hung at just the proper spot, below the tops of their high-laced boots.

The last ice went through. The river was black with silt from the "black-earth country at its source. A few big stumps and trees, up-rooted by the flood, preceded the vanguard of logs. These snags were skillfully snaked through an opening in the south boom, left open for this purpose.

"There's some clever men down there," remarked Sheriff Queen to the rail-birds who were watching the work of the pike-men with the snags.

Sim Gurley, the wiseacre who had criticized Dynamite Rand, caught the remark, and took it up.

"Huh! There ain't but one man on the river who cud be called what ye might say, now, a reg'lar river-rat, like they used to be when I was loggin'."

"Who's that?"

"Huh! You oughter know, sence he's the man you've got a warrant fer," replied old Sim. " Limber Johnson's the one I mean."

"What do you know about him?" inquired Queen, casually.

"I've watched him work," said Sim. "An' drunk or sober, that is to say, half-drunk or drunk, which is the two conditions he's likely to be in, exclusively, he can outwork an' out-*birl* an' out-ride an'—well, he's jest a reg'lar, old-style, river-hog," finished Sim. "He'll tackle any kind of a jam with steel. Why, in my time dynamitin' jams wasn't considered right. It bruk up too much vallyble timber. Course that was in the days before they used it to make paper. They made lumber out of the logs we druv in. Big stuff, that, all of it."

"Yes, I remember—" began the sheriff, but Sim Gurley brooked no interruption to his reminiscences.

"Yeah. Limber Johnson's the sort of a river-rat that they used to make before your time, Bill Queen," he cut in. "He don't fear nothin' in or on the Swango. Can't swim but he'll ride a log through the Hair-Pin Rapids or break a jam or run a loose field. An' he never even lost a peavey, they say—except those he bruk in a straight life. Never even got his terbaccer wet."

Sheriff Queen knew Limber Johnson was a good river-man, but he also knew him as one on whom red liquor acted as poison. It curdled his surly temper so that he went wild. The sheriff had recently unearthed a witness who thought that Limber had used brass knuckles in that fight with Charley Legro. This, in the code of the river, was not fair. It keened the sheriff's official determination to land and convict his man.

The drive, running river-wide, suddenly hove in sight above the shingle-mill and cut short further discussion of Limber Johnson. The sheriff's keen eyes saw the first logs before any one else glimpsed them. He also saw a swift *bateau* shoot down, close to the north bank, and judged its passenger to be as Frank Legrand, his runner. The sheriff sauntered to the end of the bridge and waited for the *bateau*, behind a pile of slabs, where a bayou ran up to a rough dock. Legrand poled up to the dock and reported.

"No, he don' be dere, wit' dat gang," the Canadian declared. "I hear he's been workin' on de logs, dough, farder up. But he's queet hees job, an' he come down rivaire, on de trail. He's head dis way."

"H-m! I thought so. Couldn't stay away," observed Sheriff Queen, with satisfaction. "I'd a feeling he'd be around when the drive came through."

"*Mon gar!* Dat drive she's comin' fas' an' she's ride loose, but she's got such a haid of wataire behin' heem she's goin' to smash somethin', dat's de way I tink," declared Legrand excitedly.

The sheriff sent Legrand up the hill to hang around Purdy's Place the one saloon the law allowed Swango. Queen was sure Limber Johnson would turn up at one of two places—the bridge or the saloon. He resumed his post on the bridge. He was going to see the drive go through.

Down on the booms there was a scene of quiet anxiety. The last snag, preceding the drive of logs, had been snaked through the opening in the south boom and the hole was closed, lashed tight, the V intact. The pike-men raked the channel for possible deadheads that might help start a jam when the free-running timber came in.

Over all the shouting and chatter of the rail-birds who watched for the start of a race as exciting as any run on turf or dirt track, rose the thunderous roar of the water plunging over the dam, through the sluice, onto the rocks in the narrow natural chute below, a roar that

drowned out even the steady rumble of the pulp-mill and the "whoosh" of steam from a newly opened digester.

The bridge vibrated sturdily and steadily to the pull of the river on its piers, along its entire length of four hundred yards. But it seemed secure.

Danger loomed so unexpectedly soon that even the boom-men were caught unaware. The first logs went through clear but, mingled with the clean-cut hemlock boles and the spruce and pine, were more snags. Big-rooted trees and nasty, gnarled, water-soaked stumps, torn from the river-bank by the flood, floated almost under-water, only the tips of branches and roots showing. One of those floated across piers four and five, and started the jam that baffled the boom-tenders. The logs stacked up swiftly behind that cross-piece, and jammed into a mess in no time.

Wisely, the first thing the boss of the boom-tenders ordered was an ax to chop the tree-trunk in two. It came down from the bridge, quickly, and Pete Gardner sprang to the job. But the logs shoved the tree-trunk down under the surface so quickly that Pete could not chop.

Then the drivers tried to snake it out, with chains hooked to the roots. It did not budge. In their effort, lined up on the south boom, pulling in unison, ten men on the chain, they snapped the weak spot in the boom. A piece of the boom, attached to pier No. 6, swung around, swiftly, and overlapped pier No. 7.

In a minute two spaces were plugged with two jams which speedily became one, for the logs soon closed the open space between piers Nos. 5 and 6, as they were crowded in from each side. The bridge was closed in midstream, for a distance of nearly one hundred yards.

The jam grew up-stream, swiftly. The drivers, working like beavers, were unable to prevent it. All they could do was shunt the logs off, on either side of the triangular mass, toward shore and send them between piers No. 1 and 2, 3 and 4; 7 and 8 and 9. And still the jam grew, wider and longer.

Jimson Rand, the boss—Dynamite Rand—arrived in a *bateau* fifteen minutes after the jam started. He despatched a man back up-stream along the river-trail to summon his gang on the double-quick.

Rand sized up the jam and decided just what every one who knew him thought he would.

"Got to dynamite it," he said to Pete Gardner.

"Yeah!" snapped Pete scornfully. "Blow up the bridge, eh?"

"No, of course not, you fool!" retorted Rand. "I can set a blast that'll just break the key-log an'—"

"Tain't a key-log. It's a whole tree, twenty feet long or more," Pete informed him. We've tried to chop it. It's buried."

"Well, there ain't no other way but dynamite, is there?" inquired Rand angrily.

Sheriff Queen came down and answered the question. He had totally forgotten Limber Johnson, and was anxious only for the safety of the State bridge. He knew what it would mean if the bridge went out. Even if one pair of piers were wrenched lose the pulp-mill would be in danger, for the whole jam, suddenly released, would surge down, river-wide, and crash against the dike that protected the mill, even though some of the logs would go over the crest of the dam.

"What ye goin' to do, Rand?" asked Queen. "This here's your drive. It's up to you. The bridge'll hold—how long I can't say. Every minute's makin' things worse."

"I've sent fer my men," growled Rand sulkily. "But all I can see to do, if you want quick action, is to shoot the mess with a stick or two of dynamite, packed in so it won't be likely to hit the piers, any."

Sheriff Queen smiled grimly.

"Dynamite, under the State bridge!" he

growled. "Rand, you've gone crazy. Maybe it's all right to blow things high and wide where they ain't nothing to get hurt but the river-bottom and the logs, but just remember that dynamite blows up. It's got to shoot off in some direction—generally in every direction. One stick would lift that timber clean through the floor of the bridge—and likely bust the piers _on each side, too."

Rand grew sulkier. But he had to defer to the sheriff's authority—and his logic. He turned on Gardner, to relieve his hurt pride.

"We best get busy, Pete," he said, "an' do what we can till my men come."

"Help ye'self to a peavey," retorted Pete, "an' get busy. I've been at it fer half an hour, myself. My men are doing all they can."

The ten who started the work were re-enforced by half a dozen from the mill, hastily recruited. They were not experts, these mill-hands, but they worked hard. The gang of sixteen were confining their efforts to an attempt to confine the jam to a triangular shaped wedge. Still the jam spread wider.

Rand got a peavey from the north boom and sullenly tackled the face of the jam. Sheriff Queen, his fighting blood up, also sought a peavey, but his attention was drawn by a chorus of shouts from the bridge:

"Here comes Limber Johnson, drunk as a lord!"

The whole town knew that Limber was wanted by the sheriff. Gossip had him charged with everything from assault with intent to kill, to homicide, deliberate and premeditated.

Limber Johnson was stary-eyed drunk. He came down the steep hill from Purdy's Place, swinging his long arms loosely and muttering to himself. His broad face, under the absurd, narrow-rimmed black felt hat he wore, was white as wax. His blue eyes, under their blond eyebrows were set in a fixed gaze as if he were strangling.

Limber was still thirsty, choking for another drink. His tongue was thick, his lips feverish, but somehow the news that the drive was in had trickled into his sodden brain. Limber was a river-driver before he was a drunkard, so he left the only open bar in Swango County and started for the river.

Limber swung onto the bridge without a look right or left, just as Sheriff Queen climbed up over the rail from the boom. Directly over the jam Limber swayed toward the rail, and the crowd parted for him. He leaned over the rail at a dangerous angle and peered, mistily, down at the mess of logs, with a sneer creeping over his set face.

"Heh!" he snorted. "Dey gone an' got a yam, already, hey?" There was fine scorn in his tone. "Whassa matter dere?" he shouted to every one in general.

Limber was top-heavy and swayed far over the low iron piping, which came only to his hips. He stood six feet three inches. His shoulders bulged his woolen shirt tight at the armholes. His tattered vest could not button across his broad chest. It was too tight. Limber was a giant.

Sheriff Queen made for him, determinedly, and the crowd followed, expectant.

The drivers at the peak of the jam were having hard work of it. The logs from up-river piled up faster than they could ward them off. The weight of the whole mass, pressing against the piers of the bridge, was making itself felt. The bridge vibrated more dangerously. Limber Johnson felt it, and through the haze induced by whisky he sensed danger.

Sheriff Queen was a dozen steps from Limber when the Swede, totally unconscious of pursuit, swung a leg over the rail and slid down a support to the jam. Only three men were working on the logs at the bridge. Dynamite Rand was one. Limber landed near him.

"Hey, dere, boss; give me dat peavey!" he demanded. Rand, disgusted, perspiring, beaten, turned the big tool he had drawn over to the Swede. It was six feet long from steel tip to rounded maple handle, sharp and strong, and weighed fully fifteen pounds. Limber spun the peavey around in the palm of his left hand, twirling it with the fingers of his right hand on the ball-shaped hand-grip.

"Dat's de peavey I been want all winter," he declared with a grin. "Dat's made for a man. Now, I brak dat yam for you, Dyn'mite."

Sheriff Queen leaned over the rail, cupped his hands and shouted down to Limber:

"Johnson, I want you. Come up here!"

The sheriff had decided not to chase Limber up and down the piers.

"Hey? Wat for? Yass, I be dere w'en I brak dat yam. I know; you want tak me to yail, dat's all. Wait a minoot."

Limber walked to where the hemlock-tree held the logs back, between piers Nos. 4 and 5, and studied the mess coolly. He was as sure of foot, now as if he stood on solid land sober. His eyes stared no longer. They sparkled with the zest of the river-rat about to tackle a bad hang-up.

The crowd on the bridge was thinning out, warned by the shiver of the steel spans. They retreated to the north bank and climbed atop the slab-piles to watch things. The sheriff and a few old-timers remained on the bridge. Shouts and cries from up-river, drivers hurrying from side to side of the wooden triangle, shoving, lifting, swearing, sweating; the clatter of peaveys; the gang from behind the drive not yet in sight—this was the situation when Limber Johnson, drunken man-slayer, announced that he would save the State bridge—with the sheriff bending over the rail above him, waiting to clap him in a cell.

They remember that yet in Swango. It is the epic of the river-town, now a city where logs are only a part of the industry that makes commerce—and men.

Limber Johnson broke three peaveys. The big one that he took from Rand's hands snapped like a match-stick at the first mighty heave Limber gave after he fastened the hook into the butt of the tree, three feet under water, braced one foot against the steel pier and pulled. The second, Pete Gardner's pet, with a handle of clean, polished, straight-grained maple lasted longer, but it snapped at the thickest part, as Limber pried against the pier, with the point thrust between the tree-butt and the steel cylinder. The third broke, too. The steel bolt was torn from its fastening, leaving Limber with merely a straight pike in his hands.

But Limber broke the jam with that pike. He succeeded in doing the impossible. He shoved that hemlock tree, bodily, across current, with the huge weight of the logs behind it. He got it clear so that the butt end slipped past the pier, grinding and vibrating. Then, with his crippled peavey, Limber jumped aboard a big log and disappeared under the bridge, from sight of Sheriff Queen who, all the time, had hung speechless and fascinated over the rail.

That was what it amounted to. But how could any man, river-hog, sheriff, or prophet believe that Limber Johnson could be drunk enough to try to shoot the Swango Steps on a log?

The sheriff ran to the down-stream side of the bridge, as Limber vanished from his sight. So did the others on the bridge. No one actually saw Limber Johnson make that crazy ride. They saw him disappear over the crest of the flood that shot over the flume. At least, they thought they did. There was only a space of three feet between the water and the edge of the drawn-up sluice-gate. Sheriff Queen, as he saw Limber bend down, double like a jack-knife, when his log shot under, jumped up on the bridge rail, swung his hat

and shouted:

"Hey, boys, there goes a man, for you! Damned if he ain't a regular river-hog, by gum!"

Then he saw him no more. No one in Swango ever saw him again—in Swango. Pete Gardner swore that he did see Limber Johnson, rafting logs, at Green Bay, that fall. No one would believe him. Dynamite Rand telegraphed Sheriff Queen from Port Washington, in November, that a man answering Limber's description had shipped on a timber-schooner for Mackinac. The sheriff tore up the telegram.

No one, for years, would believe that Limber Johnson, drunk or sober, could have gone over the seven steps, a drop of over forty feet in all, each "step" a leap from rock to rock, with the current going like mad, and the drive shooting over in a succession of *boom, boom, booms*, as each log struck stone.

But there was only one possible way Limber could have got down-stream, dead or alive. That was by the water-route. Sim Gurley, the wiseacre who had praised Limber to the sheriff, offered this ingenious explanation:

"Why, Limber, he jest grabbed a log under each arm," he said, "an' jest loped down the steps, floatin' an' runnin', an' he was so dern drunk he couldn't git killed. That's my idee."

Sheriff Queen reported the disappearance of Limber Johnson to Hicks Runyon, the county attorney.

"He's gone—dead or alive, I swear I can't tell," he said. "Pete Gardner found his broken peavey stuck in the mud, down in the flats, below the steps, and I got it as evidence, if that'll help any."

"Well," said Runyon, with a shrewd smile. "Even if he is alive, do you think there's a jury in Swango County that would convict him of manslaughter, if he was doubly guilty, after what he did?"

"No," replied Sheriff Queen dryly, "and probably it wouldn't be popular to try to convict him, either."

Some one made up a little song about Limber Johnson. The first two verses ran like this:

> Limber Johnson, river-hog,
> Broke the bridge-jam, jumped a log.
> Loped down-stream, an' got away,
> Outen jail, that's what they say.
>
> Sheriff Queen, who knows a man
> When he sees him, waved his hand:
> "Go it, Limber!" says Bill Queen.
> "I'm damn glad you're goin' clean."