John Dough and The Cherub

By L. Frank Baum, Author of "The Wizard of Oz."

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CONTINUED.

THE PALACE OF ROMANCE—(Continued).

By this time they had climbed out of the bird's body and stood upon the roof. It was so high above the rocks that it made John dizzy to look down; but Chick soon discovered a trap door that led down into the palace by means of a tiny staircase.

They descended the stairs and having pushed aside a heavy drapery that hung across a doorway came upon a broad passage running through the upper story of the palace. This led them to another passage, and still another; but although they turned this way and that in the maze of passages no living person did they meet with.

The tiled floors and panelled walls were very beautiful and splendid; but they were so much alike that our adventurers completely lost their way before they came by accident to a broad staircase leading downward to the next story. These stairs were covered with soft carpeting and the balusters were of filigree gold. Still no one was to be seen, either on the stairs or in the passages, and the palace was silent as could be.

They found another staircase, by and by, and descended to the main floor of the palace, passing through magnificent parlors and galleries, until finally a hum of pleasant voices reached their ears.

"I feel much relieved," said John, "for I had begun to think the place was uninhabited."

"Let us go on," replied Chick, "and see who these people are."

Turning first to the right, then to the left, and now following a high arched marble passage, the adventurers suddenly found themselves before heavy draperies of crimson velvet, from beyond which came clearly the sounds of laughter and the merry chattering of many people.

They pushed aside the draperies and entered a splendid domed chamber of such exquisite beauty that the sight made even Chick pause in astonishment.

All around the sides and in the ceiling were set handsome windows made of bits of colored glass, so arranged that they formed very pleasing pictures. Between the windows were panels of wrought gold, having many brilliant gems set in the metal. The floor was covered with priceless rugs of quaint patterns, and the furniture consisted of many settees and easy chairs designed to afford the highest degree of comfort.

Fountains of perfumed waters sparkled here and there, falling into golden basins; and little tables scattered about the room bore trays of dainty refreshments.

Seated within the room were groups of ladies and gentlemen, all clothed in gorgeous apparel, soft of speech, graceful and courteous in demeanor and with kindly faces.

These looked up with joyous surprise as the gingerbread man and Chick entered, and the gentlemen all arose and bowed politely to the strangers.

"Welcome!" cried the ladies in a soft chorus; and then two of their number came forward and led their unexpected guests to seats in the very centre of the room.

Others offered them refreshment, of which Chick eagerly partook, for the child was hungry. John Dough was obliged to explain that he did not eat, and they accepted his speech very graciously and did not remark at all upon his unusual personality.

When the child had finished eating John said:

"May I ask what palace this is, and who rules upon this island?"

The ladies and gentlemen exchanged significant looks and smiled, but one made answer, in a deferential voice:

"Good sir, this is the Palace of Romance and we have no ruler at all, each one of our number having equal power and authority with the others."

"We pass our time," said another, "in telling tales of romance and adventure, and whenever a stranger comes to our palace we require him to amuse us by telling all the stories he may know."

"That is a fair requirement," replied John. "I think I shall like this Palace of Romance, although I do not know many tales."

"The more tales you know the longer you may enjoy our palace," one of the ladies remarked, earnestly.

"How is that?" asked John, surprised.

They were silent for a time and ceased laughing. But finally one of the gentlemen said:

"Our laws oblige us to destroy every stranger after he has related to us all the stories he knows. It grieves us very much to tell you this, but the laws cannot be changed and the death is very simple and without much pain. For you will be dropped through a trap into a long slide leading to the bottom of the sea; and there is little discomfort in drowning."

Now, at this John looked pale and worried and even the laughing Chick became thoughtful. Several of the ladies wiped their eyes with delicate handkerchiefs, as if in sorrow for their fate, and the men all sighed sympathetically.

"Why can we not live and join your pleasant party?" asked John. "Why are your laws so severe regarding strangers?"

"We number exactly 100—fifty ladies and fifty gentlemen," was the reply. "And, as the island is small, a large number of people would crowd the palace and render it uncomfortable.

"We do not entice strangers here, but neither dare we permit them to escape and tell the world of our pleasant home, for then the ocean would be white with the ships of curious people coming to visit us. So, long ago, the laws were enacted obliging us to destroy whatever strangers chanced upon our retreat.

"But you are in no immediate danger. As long as your stories last you will live, and while you live you shall enjoy every pleasure our palace affords."

John tried to think how many stories he knew through the virtue of the magic Elixir, but the startling news he had heard so confused his mind that it drove all recollection of romance out of his head.

"Never mind," whispered Chick. "All stories except the true ones have to be made up, so I'll make up some. And don't you worry, John Dough; I've been in worse boxes than this, I can tell you."

The gingerbread man didn't know exactly what Chick meant, but the tone of confidence relieved his embarrassment and inspired him with hope. The ladies and gentlemen sat Chick and John in the centre of their group and drew their chairs around them and prepared to listen attentively to the child's story.

One might suppose the Incubator Baby's lifetime had been so brief that it knew no stories at all, but Chick was full of imagination and glad of the chance to invent wonderful tales for others to listen to. And the child had resolved to make the stories so long and so interesting that a chance of escape from death might finally be discovered.

The flying machine still rested upon the roof and if they could manage to regain it there would be no need of their being dumped into the sea.

So Chick began to tell the company a story about an astonishing Silver Pig that once lived in Dagupan (wherever that may be), and was the king of all the pigs of that vast country. His squeal could be heard for seven miles, the child solemnly declared, and the pig's feet were so swift and tireless that he could have run around the world in a single day had there been no oceans to stop him.

The ladies and gentlemen were much interested in the story and listened very attentively while Chick related a host of wonderful adventures that befell the Silver Pig. Daylight faded away and the golden lamps were lighted, but still the Incubator Baby kept the story going.

Finally one of the company interrupted the tale to say that it was bedtime and they must all retire, but Chick should continue the story on the following day.

That was exactly what the Cherub wanted, and presently John and his comrade were escorted to beautiful rooms and the company of ladies and gentlemen had bidden them a gracious and kindly good night.

THE SILVER PIG.

"How long is that story of the Silver Pig?" asked John when they were alone in their room.

"As long as I want to make it," answered Chick, brightly.

"But suppose they get tired of it?" John suggested, timidly.

"Then they'll finish us and the story at the same time," laughed the child. "But we won't wait for that, John Dough. This palace isn't a healthy place for strangers, so I guess the quicker we get away from it the better. When everybody is asleep we'll go to the place where our machine lies, up on the roof, and fly away."

"Very good," agreed John, with a sigh of relief. "I had begun to think we would be killed by these pleasant ladies and gentlemen."

They waited for an hour or two, to be sure all others in the palace were asleep, and then they crept softly from the room and began to search for the staircase. The passages were so alike and so confusing that this was no easy task; but finally, just as they were about to despair, they came upon the stairs and mounted to the upper story of the palace. And now they really became lost in the maze of cross passages that led in every direction; nor could they come to the particular doorway that led to the stairs they had descended from the little flat roof where the flying machine lay.

Often they imagined they had found the right place, but the stairs would lead to some dome or turret that was strange to them and they would be obliged to retrace their steps.

Morning found the child and the gingerbread man still wandering through the endless passages, and at last they were obliged to abandon the quest and return to their room.

All that following day the fair haired, blue eyed Baby continued the strange tale of the Silver Pig, while the ladies and gentlemen of the Palace of Romance seemed to listen with real pleasure. For long ago they had told each other all the stories they could themselves remember or imagine, so that it was a rare treat to them to hear of the adventures of Chick's Silver Pig, and they agreed that the longer the story lasted the better they would be pleased.

"I hope you will not die for several days," one lady said to the child, with a sweet smile.

That made Chick laugh.

"Don't you worry about me," was the reply. "If stories will keep me alive I'll die of old age!"

When bedtime again arrived the tale of the Silver Pig was still unfinished, and once more Chick and the gingerbread man were courteously escorted to their chambers.

They spent the second night in another vain attempt to find the stairs leading to the flat roof, and morning found them as ignorant as ever of the location of their flying machine.

In spite of the little one's courage, the task of carrying the Silver Pig through so many adventures was a very difficult feat and the child was weary for lack of sleep. On that third day John fully expected that Chick's invention would become exhausted and they would both be dropped into the sea.

Chick thought of the sea, too, but the thought gave the child one more idea, and it promptly tumbled the Silver Pig over the side of the ship and landed the adventurous animal upon the bottom of the ocean, where (Chick went on to say) it became acquainted with pretty mermaids and huge green lobsters and rescued an amaryllis from a fierce and disagreeable sea dragon.

This part of the tale soon became really exciting, and when bedtime again arrived the listeners were glad to believe they would hear more of the famous Silver Pig during the following day.

But Chick knew very well that the story had now been stretched out to the very limit, and when they were alone the child took the gingerbread man's hand and said:

"Unless we can find those stairs to-night, John Dough, our jig is up. For by tomorrow evening I'll be at the bottom of the deep blue sea, and the fishes will be having a nice supper of soaked Incubator Baby with gingerbread on the side."

"Please do not mention such a horrible thing," exclaimed John, with a shiver. "The stairs are surely in existence, for once we came down them; so let us make one more careful search for them."

This they did, walking for hours up and down the passages, pulling aside every drapery they came to, but never finding the slender staircase that led to the flat roof.

Even when it grew daylight they did not abandon the quest, for they could see their way much better than when feeling along dim passages by the uncertain light of the moon; and, as the danger grew every moment, they redoubled their eagerness in the quest.

All at once they heard footsteps approaching; and, as they were standing in the middle of a long passage, they pressed back against the marble wall to escape discovery. At once the wall gave way, and John tumbled backward into another passage, with the Cherub sprawling on top of him. For they had backed against a drapery painted to represent a wall of the outer passage, and now found themselves in a place they had not before explored.

Hastily regaining their feet, the fugitives ran down the passage, and at the end came suddenly upon another heavy drapery, which, when thrust aside, was found to conceal the identical flight of steps they had been looking for.

Uttering cries of joy, Chick and John quickly mounted the stairs and found themselves upon the flat roof.

The flying bird lay as they had left it, and they were about to crawl inside when the sound of footsteps mounting the stairs was heard.

"Quick!" shouted the child. "Jump in, John Dough!"

"Is it safe?" asked John, who remembered how they had bumped upon the roof.

"Well, it's either air or water for us, my friend, and I prefer the air," laughed Chick, her cheeks red with excitement.

John hesitated no longer and was soon inside the bird's body. Chick scrambled after, and at once pressed the electric button, while John threw over the silver lever.

The big wings began to flop just as a number of men came upon the roof uttering loud cries at the evident attempt of their prisoners to escape. But the strong pinions of the bird swept them flat like so many tenpins, and before they could get upon their feet again the flying machine was high in the air and well out of their reach.

PITTYPAT AND THE MIFKETS.

"This invention works better than I thought it would after getting that bump," John remarked, as they flew onward over the vast expanse of rolling waves.

"It's a bit wobbly, though," said Chick. "Doesn't it flop a little sideways?"

"Yes," answered John, "and it seems to me the bird does not move so swiftly as it did at first."

"Guess the 'lectricity's giving out," returned Chick calmly. "If it does, what'll happen?"

"We'll be drowned, I suppose," said John. "I don't understand electricity, for the wisdom I derive from the magic Elixir dates far back beyond the discovery of electric fluid."

"Your wisdom's baldheaded, I'm afraid" observed the child, smiling at the solemn countenance of the gingerbread man. "But say! Isn't that another island over there?" Chick continued, after a look through one of the little windows.

"It appears to be an island," replied John, also gazing through the window.

Even as he spoke the bird gave a lurch and swooped downward toward the sea, tipping at such an angle that Chick and the gingerbread man were both tumbled off their seats. John's glass eyes had a look of fear in them, but Chick laughed as merrily as if there was no danger at all, and began pushing the electric buttons with great vigor, one after another.

The result was that the flying machine paused, righted itself, plunged higher into the air, circled around a few times, and then sailed rapidly toward the west. Chick scrambled back to the seat and threw over the steering wheel in order to make the machine head directly toward the island they had seen.

"If we can keep her going till we get to that island, I don't care what happens afterward," said the child. "But if we're dumped in the sea I'm afraid we can't swim far."

"I can't swim at all," John returned, "for in three strokes my gingerbread would become soaked through and fall to pieces. And the water would dilute the Elixir that I am mixed with and destroy all its magic powers. By the way, what's the thing doing now?"

"It's getting more wabbly. But never mind. It's lots of fun, isn't it?"

"Not exactly fun," said John, seriously; "but I will admit this voyage is rather exciting."

Just then something snapped, and they heard a rapid whir of machinery inside the bird, a squeak that sounded like a wail of despair, and then a dull crash. The big machine trembled, ceased flopping its wings, and remained poised in the air like an immense kite.

"It's all up," said Chick. "The thing's busted."

"What's going to happen?" asked John anxiously.

"Wait and see," returned Chick, with a laugh.

"It's cruel to laugh when we are in such danger," said John reproachfully.

"Shucks!" cried the child. "It might be my last laugh, and I'd be foolish to miss it."

The bird was still floating, for its broad wings were rigidly spread out to their fullest extent, but every moment the machine sailed nearer to the sea and, although it was surely nearing the island, neither John nor Chick could decide whether it would finally succeed in reaching the shore or fall into the water.

Even the careless Cherub paused with bated breath to watch the final catastrophe, and John, resigned to whatever fate might befall him, nevertheless passed the most anxious moments of his brief lifetime.

The bird sailed down, rested upon the water a few feet from the shore and floated upon the surface.

Chick and John dared not open the door for fear of letting in the ocean and so being drowned. Neither could they now see where they were, for the green water pressed close against the little windows. So they sat silently within the machine until there came a sudden jar and the bird rolled over on one side and lay still.

"We're saved!" cried the Cherub.

For now one of the windows was raised above the water and enabled them to see that the bird had drifted to the shore of the island and was fast upon the beach.

Chick unfastened the door and crawled out, and then the child assisted John to leap from the machine to the shore without even wetting his feet. And it was indeed fortunate they acted so promptly, as no sooner were they safely upon the island than a big wave dashed up, caught the broken flying machine in its grasp and rolled it out to sea again, where it quickly sank to the bottom and disappeared from their view forever.

"That's all right," said the child. "I wouldn't care to ride in the thing again, anyhow. Would you, John Dough?"

"No," answered the gingerbread man. "But what a shame it was to accuse Imar of being a successful inventor. If the Kinglet of Phreex could have watched our flight he would know that Imar hasn't solved the flying machine problem yet."

"Still, it carried us away from two bad places," said Chick, "and that's all we wanted of it. Come on, John Dough, let's go and explore our island."

It did not take our adventurers long to discover they were in a really remarkable place. Near the shore was a strip of land that at first sight seemed thickly covered with grass; but when Chick examined it closely it was found to be a mass of tiny trees set close together, and each tree was full of small and tender green leaves. And as the trees were only an inch or two high they really looked like grass from a distance and proved to be soft and pleasant to walk upon.

But behind this greensward towered a forest so strange and magnificent that both Chick and John Dough held their breaths in amazed awe as they gazed upon it. For they beheld a confused group of the most gorgeous plants imaginable, most of them having broad leaves as big as the sails of a ship and of exceedingly vivid colorings.

There were violet and carmine leaves side by side, with brilliant yellows and pinks, blues and ambers, and among them great bunches of pure white leaves that in fairness rivalled the petals of a lily. Some of the huge forest plants were low and broad—no taller than an ordinary house—but many of them shot up into the sky like spires and church steeples.

Another strange thing was the fact that they were all filled with clusters of flowers of many beautiful shapes and designs. The flowers were of various tints of greens—running from a delicate pea green through all the different shades to bright emerald, and then to deep bottle greens.

Yet the flowers were the only green colors in all the vast forest of brilliant plants—which glowed so magnificently under the rays of the sun that the eyes of our friends were fairly dazzled as they gazed.

"My!" gasped Chick. "Isn't it splendiferous, John Dough?"

"It is, indeed, very gorgeous and beautiful," answered the gingerbread man. "But has it occurred to you, little friend, that there may be nothing for you to eat in all this wilderness of color?"

"Eat?" exclaimed Chick. "Why, John Dough, I'm hungry this very minute; I haven't had a bite to eat since I left the Palace of Romance, and, now you mention it, I'm half starved. But perhaps there isn't a smitch of oatmeal or cream on all this island."

"Couldn't you eat anything else?" asked John.

"Oh, I could, I suppose. But other food might make me ill, you know. Incubator babies have to be very careful of their diet."

"But if you don't eat you will die," said John, "so it will be best for you to dine upon whatever you may find."

"There may be fruits in the forest," said Chick, thoughtfully, "but it's such a queer forest that quite likely the fruits are poisonous."

"Still, you'd better try them," persisted the gingerbread man. "If you don't you'll die, and if you are poisoned you'll die. But there is a chance of your finding healthful fruits instead of poisonous ones. I regret that in all my store of wisdom derived from the Arabian Elixir there is no knowledge of such a forest or the fruits these gay plants may bear."

"Well, you wait here till I come back," said Chick, more cheerfully. "I'll explore and see what I can find. There's no need to worry until the time comes, anyhow."

With that the little one waved a chubby hand toward John Dough, and then ran into the forest and disappeared beneath the great purple and orange leaves.

To be continued.

AT HOME IN NOVA SCOTIA.

Yankee Cop, Bandmaster and Coachman Entertain a Visitor.

"You are not always in a foreign country when you are out of the United States," said a man who was exchanging experiences with a friend just as the orchestra finished playing a medley of American airs. "That number recalls an evening in Nova Scotia last summer.

"I was held up in a coast town one evening, waiting the arrival of a belated steamer. The only attraction in the place was an open air concert by the town band, and I strolled out to kill time. The members of the band wore the red uniform, and the British colors were suspended from the front of the stand.

"I took my seat on a fence near by. Just as I got myself well balanced a cop came and courteously informed me that the fence was private property and that I would have to climb down. I obeyed orders.

"While waiting for the music I chatted with the cop. The band got busy and played several numbers, all foreign airs.

"Then I asked the cop if he knew the leader. He said he did. I asked him to butt in and tell the leader that an American was in the crowd, and that he would like to hear something from home.

"The leader obliged and the band rendered 'Old Black Joe,' 'Maryland,' 'Suwanee River,' 'Nelly Gray,' 'Yankee Doodle,' 'Dixie,' and wound up with the 'Star Spangled Banner.' The multitude applauded and I made my share of noise.

"While the band was playing this potpourri the cop asked:

"'Where are you from?' When I told him he said, 'You can get up on the fence if you won't stay too long. I'm from the United States myself.'

"I gave him a cigar and we got chummy. I told him to thank the leader for me, and tell him that he had made me feel as if I was not very far from home.

"'I guess he knows how it is himself,' said the cop. 'He's from the States, too. He lives in Boston and comes over here in the summer to give the band lessons. He told me once that although all the members were Canucks they learned American airs quicker than any other.'

"After the concert I took a seat in a conveyance that took me back to my hotel. It was crowded and I sat beside the driver. He was very polite and I asked him if he was a Blue Nose.

"'Not by a long shot,' he replied. 'I come from Woonsocket, R. I. I'm up here to skin these Canucks, and I'm doing it, all right.'

"Then indeed I felt as if I was not far from home."

ODD CASE OF COMBUSTION.

Rose Bushes Shipped in Wet Moss Almost Burned Up.

A peculiar case of spontaneous combustion, or something like it, is described by a writer in *Cassier's Magazine*.

On February 17, 1906, two large refrigerator cars of young rosebushes were received at Hannibal, Mo., from a nursery in California. They were shipped in wooden cases containing numerous auger holes for ventilation and were carefully packed with wet sphagnum, or California swamp moss, to prevent chafing and to support their vitality.

No ice was put in the cooling tanks, and the covers of these, as well as all other openings in the cars, were closed as tightly as possible. The cars were ten days in transit. The outside temperature was 60 degrees Fahrenheit at the start and 15 degrees at the end of the trip.

Upon arrival steam was issuing from every crevice of the cars. Upon removing the tank covers it rushed out in large volume. The doors were opened and ice was put in the tanks; the free circulation of cold air soon cooled the contents of the cars.

In unloading it was discovered that some of the upper layers of boxes were badly damaged by heat, which naturally was most intense near the top of the cars. No signs of actual combustion were found, but this would probably have occurred in a short time had not the cars been quickly cooled.

The temperature must have been nearly up to the burning point, as many of the green stems of these plants were black and brittle.

Wet sawdust in large quantities frequently becomes very warm in the interior even when exposed to winter weather, in fact the lower the temperature of the atmosphere the hotter usually the sawdust.

HIS FIRST THANKSGIVING.

UNCLE JASON CALLS ON THE MAN FROM THE KNOB COUNTRY,

And Tells How He Saved His Mother From a Panther When He Was Three Months Old—But the Result Is Not All That He Expected—Uncle Jase's T'other Spot.

LACKAWAXEN, Pa., Nov. 24.—"I concluded I didn't keer fer no supper," said the man from the Knob country, "'cause I'd had a toler'ble comf't'ble Thanksgivin' dinner o' roast ven'son an' b'ar steak, an' a stewed pheasant, an' a little the best rabbit pie I ever sot tooth into, an' a couple o' hunks o' punkin pie, setch as nobody outside o' my Hanner Jane kin come anywheres nigh the makin' the likes of, an' thort 't that was solid victuals enough, without puttin' Hanner Jane to the work o' dishin' up supper—an'' anyhow, Hanner Jane had gone to some doin's over to the Eddy arter she had done up the dinner things.

"So I sot by the fireplace with a plate o' crisp an crinkly Hanner Jane made crullers, sort o' washin' one on 'em down now an' then with a swaller or two o' cider outen the blue chany pitcher, when who sh'd come in but Uncle Jason.

"'Hello, Jase! I says. 'Glad to see ye! Take a cheer!' I says.

"Uncle Jase was moppin' his face an' eyein' the blue pitcher, but he found a cheer an' sot down.

"'Dan'l,' says he, swallerin' pooty hard, 'I'm disapp'inteder than if I'd follered a b'ar ten miled an' then treed a coon! I thort there was goin' ter be preachin' in the schoolhouse to-night,' says he, 'an' I kim all the way over only to find out that there wa'n't goin' ter be none, arter all!'

"'Why, yes there is, Jase!' says I, an' I see that he didn't cheer up much to hear it. 'In the Corners schoolhouse,' says I.

"'Oh!' says he, lookin' as if he felt easier in his mind. 'In the Corners schoolhouse, hay? Huh!' says he. 'Now, ain't that jes' too bad? I thort, o' course, it was goin' to be the Ridge schoolhouse,' says he.

"'Well, Uncle Jase,' says I, consolin' like, 'it's only half a miled over the creek,' I says. 'You got plenty o' time. It's consider'ble nigher than the Ridge schoolhouse 'd 'a' ben, anyhow,' I says.

"'Tain't that!' says Uncle Jason, speakin' quick. "Tain't that!' he says. 'You know, Dan'l,' says he, 'I don't pay no taxes over in that deestric', an' o' course I don't keer to push myself in an' git the benefit o' the preachin' o' them as does pay taxes over there,' he says; an' seems as if he couldn't take his eyes offen that blue chany pitcher, nohow.

"'It's unfort'nit, Dan'l,' says he, 'that I'm made so unpushin', but setch I be. An' I hurried up so, I was so 'feard I'd be late,' says he, 'that I'm dryer than a smoked herrin'! Is it water you've got in that blue pitcher, Dan'l?' says he.

"'No, Uncle Jase,' says I. 'It's cider. But I'll go git you some water,' says I, an' I riz an' made a start.

"'No, no!' says Uncle Jase, jumpin' from his cheer, lookin' skeert, an' reachin' out to stop me. 'Don't go to that trouble, Dan'l!' says he. 'Mebbe the cider 'll tetch the spot. Don't put yourself out by goin' fer the water, jest fer me! I'll resk the cider, Dan'l,' says he.

"Then, o' course, I sot down ag'in, an' Uncle Jason had his eyes sot so onto the tumbler as I poured him out some cider that I don't believe he see the grin I couldn't keep from comin' 'crosst my face, that idee o' his'n that he'd resk the cider bein' so sort o' sing'lar.

"'There' says he, arter he had drinked the cider an' sot a minute with one eye cocked up to the ceilin' as if he was waitin' to see how it'd work. 'There, Dan'l,' says he. 'It tetched the spot 'most as good as water would, an' I'm glad I saved you the trouble o' gettin' some,' says he.

"Then he sot a minute lookin' as if there was another spot he'd like to have tetched, but I was pokin' up the fire an' didn't notice it, an' by an' by he says:

"'The first Thanksgivin' I ever had, Dan'l,' says he, 'I was jest three months old to a day, an' I saved my mammy from being' eat by a panther—me an' our old hoss Tinderbox did,' says he. 'You must recomember our old hoss Tinderbox, Dan'l,' says he.

"Now, it was all right fer Uncle Jason to say he had saved his mammy from bein' eat by a panther when he was only three months old, 'cause Uncle Jase has got a fur reachin' an 'never failin' memory, an' he ain't never afeard o' usin' it, though lightnin' has struck the tavern twice when he was turnin' of his memory loose, but when he said that I must recomember their old hoss Tinderbox, me bein' three years younger yit than Uncle Jase, an' him being' only three months old when Tinderbox was 'way along in years an on his last legs, that sort o' riled me.

"I didn't say nothin', but I thunk.

"'That first Thanksgivin' come to my mind as I was hurryin' over here, thinkin' I was goin' to hear some preachin',' says Jase, 'an' I says to myself that as of course you'd be to meetin' too, I'd tell you 'bout it as we was walkin' home,' says he, "cause it was somethin' most amazin'. So I s'pose I mowt as well tell you now,' says he, 'an' it'll ease my disapp'intment some.'

"I lit my pipe, but didn't say nothin', but I see that Jase's t'other spot that needed tetchin' was gittin' bigger an' bigger. Jase swallered pooty hard agin', two or three times, then heaved a sigh that come 'most from his boots, an' perceeded:

"'Pap owned a sawmill down yender in the valley,' says he, 'an' I was born next door to it, an' with setch an overpowerin' heft o' lung that my mammy used to say that when I started in to use it I could drownd out the sawmill so that when I shet up ag'in it didn't sound no more than if it was only a coffee mill, that sawmill didn't.

"'But it was a mighty lucky thing fer mammy, Dan'l,' says Uncle Jase, 'that I had setch an all pervadin' an' fur reachin' spread o' bawl. An' fer me, too, I mowt say. Yes, an' fer me, too.

"'That Thanksgivin' when I was three months old, Dan'l,' says Jase, 'my mammy made up her mind that she must take me down to her folks's an' show me off, an' they lived ten miled away, the road bein' every inch o' the way through the wilderness. Our old hoss Tinderbox had been a racehoss in his day an' gineration, an' even then, when he was on his last pins, he could go like a streak when he wanted to, but he had a contrary mind that made him a l-e-e-e-tle onsartin to drive.

"'If that hoss took it into his head to go, Dan'l, go that hoss would, an' you had to let him go till he took it into his head to stop, an' the sing'larity of him was that he always took it into his head to go like that when you didn't want him to, an' always took it into his head to stop when you wanted him to go.

"'An' that was the hoss, Dan'l, my mammy had to drive if she took me down to her folks's to show me off, an' as show me off she was bound to, drive that hoss she did. There was always snow on the ground Thanksgivin's in them days, an' so they hooked old Tinderbox up to the sled, an' me an' mammy started fer her folks's.

"'The old hoss buzzed along like he was on the homestretch in a race an' was bound to win, 'cause mammy, as she used to say, p'tended that she wanted him to go slow. There was panthers in the woods, Dan'l, in them days, as you well know,' says Uncle Jase, 'but there hadn't ben none heerd on nor seen around in that deestric' fer some time, my pap bein' a partic'lar onfailin' shot at panthers.

"'Well, Dan'l, me an' mammy an' old Tinderbox had travelled I guess somethin' like three miled, when mammy heered a hair raisin' screech behind us. She knowed what it was that was fillin' them woods with that tremendous yellin', an' lookin' back she see him comin' a-bouncin' outen the woods into the road, not more than ten rod in the rear, an' a big an' ugly feller he was, too.

"'An' he was hungrier than a hull pack o' wolves, she knowed, by the way he kim tearin' after us. Mammy wa'n't skeert a bit, though, 'cause the way the old hoss was skippin' along there wa'n't no panther that ever scratched his toenails in the gravel could git within any kind o' distance o' him.

"'The panther would gain a little by spurtin' now an' then, but he couldn't keep the pace with old Tinderbox, an' if mammy hadn't lost her head fer a second I wouldn't 'a' had this here to tell you, Dan'l, as to how I saved her.

"'In one o' his spurts the panther hauled up toler'ble close in our rear, an' that give mammy a little skeer, an' she forgot herself so fur as to give the old hoss a slap with the lines as a hint that he was expected to stir his stumps a leetle more.

"'That was a mistake, o' course, fer Tinderbox knowed to wunst that he was wanted to hurry, an' he stopped in the road as if he had ben shot. An' there he stood, Dan'l, with the yellin' panther sweepin' down onto us like a ragin' hurricane.'

"Uncle Jase stopped about as sudden as old Tinderbox had, an' sort o' rattled his tumbler ag'in his cheer, an' swallered as if his throat was tired. There wa'n't no kind o' doubt but what that t'other spot was gittin' amazin' bad, an' wanted tetchin' the wust way, but I was thinkin'.

"'That was a ticklish sitiwation to be in, Uncle Jase,' says I; an' Uncle Jase he swallered hard ag'in, an' said yes, it was; but he acted to me as if he felt he was in a consarned sight ticklisher one right then.

"'Yes, Dan'l,' says he, 'it was. The panther kim tearin' on like a ragin' hurricane,' says he, 'an' mammy made up her mind it was all up with me an' her. The panther got within three jumps o' us an' mammy couldn't think o' nothin' else to do but jest shet her eyes an' squeeze me up ag'in her. Whether she squoze me a little too tight I ain't able to say, but somehow it must 'a' struck me that things wa'n't movin' along in the right groove an' I give a kick an' a squirm, an' then let them amazin' lungs o' mine loose.

"'Dan'l,' says Uncle Jase, 'mammy used to say that when that unbounded yoop o' mine broke out in them dark an' doleful woods that panther couldn't 'a' stopped any quicker if he had run head on ag'in a ton o' rock. His eyes popped 'way out onto his cheeks, he was so took back.

"'Then I lifted up my voice in the wilderness ag'in. The panther didn't wait to hear no more. He turned so quick that he fell over backward, an' getherin' himself up he bounced into the woods a good deal faster than he had bounced out, an' he never a wunst looked back, as fur as mammy could see him cuttin' it away betwixt the trees.

"'That seemed to be all that I had riz up an' howled fer to do,' says Uncle Jase, 'an' I quieted down right away, an' by an' by old Tinderbox got it into his head that we wanted him to stand there in the road the rest o' the day, an' so away he started on the double quick, an' never stopped till he got to mammy's folks's; an' if I didn't git a showin' off, then no three-months-old young un that had saved his mammy from bein' eat by a panther never did, Dan'l!' says Uncle Jase, 'an' it sort o' eases up my disapp'intment about the preachin' to tell you about it,' says he.

"But I was thinkin', an' t'other spot didn't git tetched. Not a bit.

"Uncle Jase had said that o' course I recomembered their old hoss Tinderbox, an' Uncle Jase is three year older than I be, an' Tinderbox was on his last legs when Uncle Jase was three months old! That was somethin' I couldn't help but think about, an' Uncle Jase's t'other spot didn't git tetched," said the man from the Knob country.

CROOKED LAMP POSTS.

Mrs. Dolby Forced to Retract Certain Suspicions of Mr. Dolby.

When Mrs. Dolby gave Dolby his anteprandial kiss she sniffed audibly.

"Oh, dear," she said. "Again? How many this time?"

"Only one," said Dolby, "and that was a little teenty fellow. I stopped in to see a man around the corner and took just one thimbleful for appearance sake."

Mrs. Dolby sighed.

"And you promised so faithfully," she said. "It seems as if you never can keep your word."

Dolby stalked toward the dining room indignantly.

"What's the sense in raising a row about a little thing like this?" he said. "That one swallow wouldn't hurt a fly."

"But it has hurt you," retorted Mrs. Dolby. "It has gone to your head. I don't believe you know now what you are saying."

Dolby groaned. Presently, under the influence of a good dinner, he began to talk sociably.

"Did you ever notice," he said, "how confoundedly crooked the street lamps are in this town?"

Mrs. Dolby gasped.

"Crooked?" she said.

"Yes," said Dolby, "crooked. I never noticed it till to-night. At the first corner we struck after I got in the car I saw that the lamp was doing its level best to turn itself upside down.

"After that I kept a watch on all the Broadway lamps and I found that nineteen out of the twenty-two that we passed were tip tilted over in the craziest positions imaginable. They looked disreputable.

"It would be a good thing, I think, now that the city seems to be agitating the street lamp question in dead earnest, not only to get new ones, but to straighten up the ones we have."

Mrs. Dolby looked across the table in reproach.

"Well," she said, "if the subject you chose for a conversation isn't a giveaway. And before the children, too. You are even worse than I thought you were, if you see street lamps standing on their heads."

Again Dolby groaned.

Mrs. Dolby worried over the unconventional attitudes of the city's lamps all the evening. Even the next morning, when Dolby had gone down town, she was still in a spirit of depression.

Later, as she started out on a shopping tour, the lamp question still clung to her. Almost unconsciously she glanced at a street lamp and found it was crooked. Then she began to get interested.

She was going over the same route her husband had travelled the night before, and she studied the street lamps as he had done. He was right. Nineteen out of the twenty-two lamps were crooked.

Mrs. Dolby's conjugal soul was moved to repentance.

"I was unjust," she said. "The city is to blame. I will never find fault with Mr. Dolby again if he swears that every lamp in town is turning somersaults."

THE REMITTANCE MAN'S TOWN

CALGARY A HEADQUARTERS FOR BRITISH NE'ER DO WELLS.

Exiles in the Canadian Northwest Who Do Little Save Await the Coming of Their Quarterly Allowance and Then Spend It —Spendthrift Who Borrowed a Ranch.

It's just possible if you are accustomed to the grind of the city that you have never heard of that paradise for the well meaning but misguided—Calgary, the joy of the remittance man.

Calgary is a town in the Canadian Northwest, about nine hundred miles further along the line than Winnipeg and in the midst of a rich ranching country. It is growing fast and in the near future it will no doubt lose its attraction for wayward sons of English families.

There are a good many remittance men in the great Northwest, sons of wealthy Englishmen sent out to the wilds to prevent them from disgracing the old people at home. England itself is such a little place that once a young man does something out of the ordinary, whether good or bad, it speedily becomes a matter of public knowledge. So the doers of evil are sent away to expiate their sins in the bracing air of the prairie, while the doers of good remain to build up the name.

The traveller who meets a remittance man for the first time will probably be struck by the fact that he is well bred. So he is; but he divides his year usually into quarters and measures time from the arrival of his money from home.

Invariably the remittance is sent on the condition that the recipient keep himself absent from the British Isles. So the remittance man feels himself more or less wedded to the country of his forced adoption and tries to make the best of it.

How Calgary first attracted these wandering spirits no one seems to know, but they are there. Calgary has the ordinary attractions of the Western town and the usual saloons and the usual clubs.

Of course it sounds very nice to be in the position of getting from $1,000 to $5,000 a year just to stay where one is put and behave oneself as well as one can without turning robber or highwayman. But the remittance man finds it hard to change his habits even with the world smiling fresh about him every morning.

He goes on drinking just as he did at home and playing for high stakes just as he did at home and getting into difficulties just as he did at home. The one saving feature, from his point of view, is that all remittances do not arrive the same day.

If they did it might be better for all concerned, for then somebody would have to work, but as it is the red letter days are scattered over all seasons and the colony reaps the advantage. Every remittance man knows the remittance days of the others as well as he does his own and he goes on the theory that if he spends all his allowance for the entertainment of the others they will spend all their allowances for his entertainment.

Trust a remittance man for scenting out a newcomer. There are grand times when he arrives. He is dined and admitted as a special privilege into the resorts of gaming and drinking. He feels himself quite at home with the old accent all about him and every incentive to keep on with his old wild ways.

Queer stories are told of remittance men. There was one young fellow sent out from Manchester as a hopeless case. He landed on a ranch near Calgary and for a time rode about and appeared to be trying to make something out of himself; but by and by he fell under the charm of the Remittance Club, and the old temptations were too strong to be resisted.

After he had written a glowing letter home telling of the glories and the possibilities of the country he ended up by expressing the hope that his father would send him enough money to buy a ranch. The delighted father complied at once, and the next letter made a further request for cash to stock the ranch with cattle.

After the industrious son had with his companions got away with $35,000 the father sent a cable despatch saying that he was coming to look over the ranch. There was a lively time among the remittance men when the despatch reached the son. He hesitated for a long time between flight and confession, but at last a happy thought struck him.

He borrowed the use of a ranch from a friend for three days and awaited his father's arrival with the greatest equanimity. When the old gentleman came he was driven out to the borrowed ranch and entertained for the three days, his devoted son never leaving his side.

On departing the father gave the son an order for $25,000 to show his appreciation of his reformed life. There was general rejoicing as long as the money lasted, but it went speedily in the usual ways.

There are not wanting men who get allowances from home and who work hard at ranching the year round save on the day and the few days following the arrival of their money. Then they go to town and spend it all recklessly and are apparently willing to work for their keep until the next quarter.

Calgary itself is not proud of being the headquarters of this class of ne'er do wells, but there is no way to prevent the spending of money. The hope is that the remittance man will in time imbibe enough of the enthusiasm for the country's future to throw his influence in the path of development.

PROFIT IN PICKING FERNS.

Around Springfield the Farm Folks Turn to It in the Fall.

SPRINGFIELD, Mass., Nov. 17.—At this time of the year and until the heavy snows the residents of the Hampshire hills are busy earning pin money by fern picking. The fern leaves used for decorations are not grown in hothouses but on rugged hills, and especially on the hillsides of Hampshire county, Mass. Thousands of ferns are picked here every fall and early winter by the country folk and shipped to city dealers, who pay from $1.25 to $2 a thousand for them, according to the season. The cost to the fern picker is merely the labor of picking, for any one is at liberty to gather ferns who has ambition and a strong back.

The ferns are most luxuriant in and around Huntington and whole families start out together to gather them. The sword fern is the variety they are after and this gets its full growth by the middle of October. Only the long straight leaves are cut and the roots are not touched. A small bladed knife or a pair of sharp scissors is a necessity, for the stalk of the fern leaf is very tough and will cut the fingers if an attempt is made to break it with the hands. Care is taken to lay the fern leaves perfectly flat and then they are taken to the farmhouse to be made up into bundles of 1,000. Some farmers have a contract to supply 5,000 a week to the florists in the cities of Springfield and Holyoke.

One woman accumulates an enormous supply in the fall and puts them in cold storage to meet the demand that comes at Christmas and New Year's. All the young people in the village spend their spare time in gathering the ferns for her and she pays them 40 cents a thousand.

Another pursuit that these country folk engage in at this time of the year is gathering wintergreen. The plant is now at its best and its berries are rich in oil. The plant grows abundantly in these hills and it is not difficult to gather a bushel of leaves in a day. A good price is paid for them by Boston and New York drug firms.