

**THE SAWED-OFF MAN**

He Doesn't Get a Fair Show in This World of Tall Ones.

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"Do you know, sir—do you know that I'm seriously contemplating suicide?" said the sawed-off man, as he put his back to the front wall of the post office and got a brace of his feet to hold him there.

"What sorrowful thing has happened?" was asked.

"Nothing special. It's simply the continuation of a sorrow that came with my birth. I've got tired of being a sawed-off man and want a change. For 30 years I've been trying to bear up under it and deceive myself, but I've got to open my eyes whether I want or not. A sawed-off man is simply N. G. in this world, and the sooner he gets out of it the happier he will be."

"What has a man's height to do with joys and sorrows?" queried the other.

"Everything, sir—everything. If you were a sawed-off man you would not ask that question. You would have been made to realize, almost from your birth, that height means more than riches. I can't remember what happened up to my first birthday, but from that time on I was a miserable baby. If I'd been designed for either a dime museum midget or a modern Hercules nobody would have heard a kick from me, but the doctor settled it that I was to be a betwixt and between and thus wrecked my life. If I'd been a midget the women would have taken me up in their arms and exclaimed: 'Oh! how little and cute!' If I'd been designed for a giant they would have rolled me around and cried out: 'My, but isn't he a whopper!' Being a betwixt and between they poked their fingers into my ribs and contemptuously said: 'Why, he'll grow up to be a runt of a man!'"

"Well, you grew up," said the other after a painful pause.

"Of course I did!" bitterly exclaimed the sawed-off man, as he waved an arm about. "Death could have stepped in at any time until I was 12 years old and found me innocent hearted and insured me further happiness, but death would not do it. I was too small to be noticed. Even the measles and whooping cough passed me by, and I can't remember that I ever fell into a mud-hole, down a well or got run over by a butcher cart. As a kid all the other kids called me 'runt' or 'banta.' I was left out of all games because my legs were too short, and if I was invited to a party it was that they might make fun of me. Oh, yes—oh, yes, I remember all about it, and the wonder is that I haven't turned loose and killed a dozen tall men before this!"

The other didn't know exactly what to say and so kept silent, and with a sob in his throat the sawed-off man continued:

"As a young man I was neither a baby, a kid, a youth, a young man nor a man. Nobody could get a line on me, I had the legs of a boy, the body of a youth and the head of a young man, and I can't wonder that folks were puzzled. When I recall those years of doubt and suffering and sorrow I want to die right here and now. I don't know why I lived to be a man. Perhaps I had a dim idea that I might get blown up on a steamboat, wrecked on

proposal for two weeks she decided to throw me over and marry a man six feet tall. As to matrimony, I'm hoodooed, sir—knocked clean over the fence because I'm a 'banta.' Like all other men, I wanted to go into politics. I couldn't see no reason why I shouldn't be an alderman. I had the brain power and the money, but when I began to lay wires I was laughed to scorn. The professional ward heelers wouldn't even take my cash and holler for me. I never heard that there was a rule that a politician should be over a certain height and weight, but it seems there is, and that sawed-off men must stand aside. I've thought of taking the lecture field. I've got a feeling that I could entertain an audience and make \$200 a week for myself, but there is a bar again. I go to the manager of a lecture bureau and ask for an engagement, and he leans back and laughs. Then he wants to know whether I propose to stand on stilts or take a seat on the top of a step-ladder while delivering my remarks. If I get on my dignity it reminds him of a chicken bristling up to a strawstack, and if I seek to arouse his sympathy he pats me on the head and calls me 'bub.' Are you looking down on me and listening from up there?"

"It's tuff—tuff," replied the other. "I never had any idea that a sawed-off man met up with such sorrows."

"Probably not. The tall world goes skating along with never a thought of



"ONLY HALF FARE FOR CHILDREN."

the short. A year or so ago I turned to poetry. I mailed a poem to a magazine and received a check for \$25 and an order for a second idyl. Instead of mailing it I carried it in. The result was what I might have expected. The editor said he wasn't publishing a children's magazine, and that I'd better send my stuff to some juvenile publication. It was the same thing when I turned to prose. I wrote a story about the big trees of California, and the editor looked from the story to me and laughed like the hyena he was and said the inconsistency was too vivid. His advice was that I write of currant bushes. Oh, yes—oh, yes, I've been through it and am nearing the end! As a sawed-off man I've fought the world and been downed, and it's no use to kick against fate. This morning I had a little gleam of sunshine and almost decided to live on. I was drawn on the jury, same as any other man. I haven't shown up yet, and don't know what sort of a welcome I'll get from the judge, but in serving me with the notice the constable didn't even grin. I was patting myself on the back over this when I took the car to come down. I handed the conductor a nickel and turned away, but he thrust two cents at me and smilingly said: 'Only half fare for children on this route!' And now, sir—and now what do you say to all this? Would you continue to live on as a sawed-off man, or would you end it all in sweet oblivion?"

"Well, sonny," began the other, as he stared at the billboards across the street, but the sawed-off man threw up his hands and shouted:

"There you go—there you go! You call me 'sonny' in place of 'sir' or 'misther!' You wouldn't dare do that if I was six feet high and weighed 150 pounds! No, sir, you wouldn't!"

"But see here, kid, I want to—"

"Kid! Kid!"

"Well, youngster, give me a show. I was going to say that—"

"Stop! I might have known that it would happen when we first started in. There is no show for a sawed-off man on this earth. It is the end. Good night and good-by!"

And the little man started off into the night, and grew smaller and smaller by degrees, until he had reached the end of the block and vanished entirely from sight. And the tall man watched him until he became nothing, and then smiled at the billboard and whispered:

"That peppery little cuss ought to be spanked and put to bed."

**Honest Tom.**

Teacher—You have named all domestic animals save one. It has bristly hair, it is filthy, likes dirt and is fond of mud. Well, Tom?

Tom (shamefacedly)—That's me.—The Rival.

**All the World Could Hear.**

Mrs. Crimsonbeak—My life, John, is an open book.

Mr. Crimsonbeak—That's the trouble; I wish to goodness I could shut you up some time!—Yonkers Statesman.



MARRY A MAN SIX FEET TALL.

a railroad or meet with a cyclone, and that I'd get telescoped into a midget or drawn out into a man, but this has never happened. I am still a 'runt'—a 'banta'—a 'sawed-off.' You seem 'o pity me, but you couldn't pity me enough if you went into it is a business on a capital of \$250,000. Say, now, just imagine me as delivering a Fourth of July address, will you! I know the history of this country from the landing of the Mayflower down, but if I was to be put up on a platform to tell of its glorious record I'd get the grand guy before I opened my mouth. You can't make nobody believe that a sawed-off man has any oratory in his head or patriotism in his heart."

"I think I see," mused the other, as he slowly nodded his head.

"You see, of course. How could you help it? At the age of 23 I felt it my duty to marry. How d'ye think I came out? I couldn't find a girl on the face of the earth who wasn't at least a head taller than I am, and I got the throw down till I had to give it up in despair. My last love affair was with a midget two feet high, but after considering my

**IS IT ROUND OR FLAT?**

Jep Jones Tells How the Squan Creek Folks Debated the Question.

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One day Deacon Spooner met Abraham Cosgrove as the latter was coming up from the fishin' dock, and after the deacon had told about bein' seized with cholera morbus in the night and received a proper amount of sympathy, he said:

"Look here, Abraham, sunthin' orter be done to kinder stir our folks up."

"That's jest what I was thinkin' of this mornin'," says Abe.

"It's comin' on fall and long evenin's, and you know what the programme will be. For six evenin's in the week about 40 of us will gather at Parker's grocery and talk about sharks and whales and wrecks, and every man will be on his mettle to tell a bigger lie than anybody else. It ain't the thing to do, Abe Cosgrove, and you know it ain't."

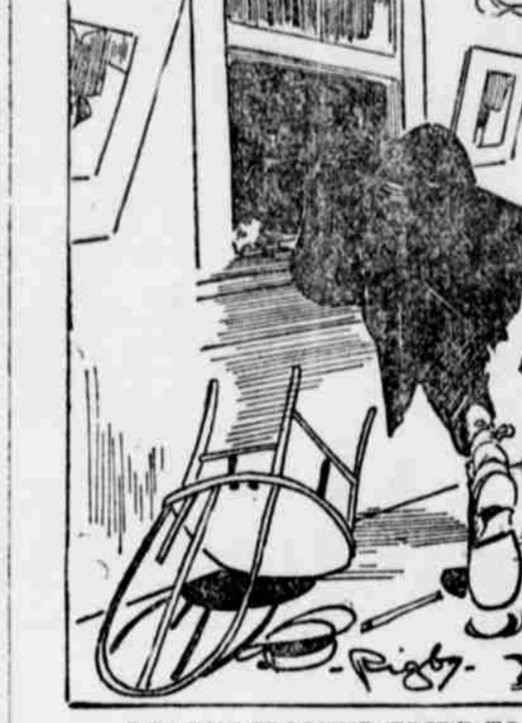
"It's kinder pleasant to hear folks lie," says Abe as a smile rests on his face.

"Yes, I know, and we like to lie ourselves, but it ain't human progress. Sittin' around a one-hoss grocery and tellin' lies ain't calculated to put this town on no pinnacle. 'Pears to me the time has come when we orter git above sich things."

"What shall we do, deacon?"

"I've thought it all over, and it 'pears to me that we orter git up a debatin' society. We can call up all sorts of questions and talk and argue, and I guess we'll learn sunthin' from it."

Abe thought the plan a good one, and he and the deacon went to talkin' with others, and the result was that a debatin' society was organized. It



DEACON SPOONER TRIED TO CLIMB OUT OF THE WINDOW.

took in about every man in Squan Creek, and on the night the first meetin' was held a good share of the crowd had combed their hair for the first time in four weeks. Deacon Spooner was elected president as a reward for bringin' out the idea, and when the machinery was in order he rose up and said:

"We will now proceed to introduce a question and debate it. I think we'd better begin way back at first principles and work up sorter gradually. In that way nobody will run the risk of bein' suddenly paralyzed. We will begin with the world. I've heard say that it was round, and I've heard say that it was flat. As I've never been further than Philadelphia my mind is not fully made up. Them as thinks the world is round will speak first."

Moses Simpson was the first man to speak. He said he used to believe the world was flat until he made a trip out west. After gittin' 100 miles from Squan Creek he noticed that his feet kept slippin', and that it was hard to stand up straight, and by the time he reached Buffalo he was lookin' around for life lines to hang on to. He continued on as far as Toledo, but there got so frightened that he turned and came home. He believed that if he had gone 100 miles further he would have rolled off into space. He was firmly satisfied that the world was round, and would stick to it if he never caught another lobster during the rest of his life.

The second speaker was Absalom Jones. A hog had broken into his garden that day and rooted things up, and he had come to the meeting feelin' out of sorts. Besides, he had always known the world was flat, and he got up and pitched into Moses like a ton of brick. He said it was whisky instead of sidehill which ailed him when he went west, and he wanted to know how it was that Chicago, Omaha, Denver and San Francisco hadn't fallen off. He had seen enough of this world to know that it was flat, and should Squan Creek decide otherwise his house and lot were for sale at half price. His remarks stirred up everybody else, and things began to git hot.

When Goliath Schermerhorn got up his ears was workin' and his hair curlin'. He favored the roundness of the world, and he said that any man who stuck out for flatness ought to be packed off to an idiot asylum that very night. He didn't know why it was that things didn't slide downhill, but as they hadn't be wasn't worryin' over it. He

had heard that the world revolved on its axis like a wagon wheel. That might be a newspaper sensation, got up to scare women and children, but 'ere was no doubt of the roundness of the earth. If it was flat, then Squan Creek folks would be able to see Philadelphia or New York.

When Deacon Spooner saw how things was goin' he tried to switch the meetin' off on to another question, but the audience wouldn't have it. Every man seemed to feel that the future of Squan Creek was at stake, and when roses were counted up it was found that the adherents was about equally divided. Henry Joslyn, who went in for the flatness of the world, sent his boy home for a baseball, and then he showed the meetin' that nuthin' could stick to it except on the very top. He argued that if this world was round, even spiked shoes wouldn't save the people from fallin' off, and that the roots of every tree would hev to be drawn inside and clinched fast to sunthin'. The idea of an ocean on a sidehill, with no water sloppin' over, was too absurd for even babies.

The thirty men who were for the roundness of the world all wanted to speak at once as Henry got through, but Philetus Taylor finally got the floor and started in to make the splinters fly. He claimed that the Bible the life of Captain Kidd, the Farmer's Almanac and a dozen other books furnished indisputable proof that the world was round, but he had his own personal experience to bank on. He had watched his old spotted cow making across the Jersey meadows in search of shade. She gradually got smaller and smaller, and the last thing to be seen of her was a whisk of the tail. He had known a rain barrel or a well to go dry in one night. That was proof that the revolution of the earth



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had tipped them over. He had woke up in the morning and found his feet lighter than his head, and who could dispute that proof? As to why the oceans and lakes didn't spill over he wasn't prepared to say, but would look the matter up before he slept. In closin' he confessed his utter surprise that men could be found in Squan Creek at that day so densely ignorant as to believe with the heathen of Africa.

There wasn't any more speechmakin' or debatin'. Jim Logan, who had always held to the idea that the earth was the shape of a Jersey watermelon after a cow had stepped on it, jumped up on a chair and called Philetus a liar and Absalom an idiot, and next minute everybody was fightin'. Deacon Spooner, who was to blame more than anyone else, dodged a chair thrown at his head and tried to climb out of the window. They pulled him back and hammered him so bad that he was laid up for a month. It wasn't a fight between the flats and rounds but a free-for-all, and it lasted till every man had rolled downstairs. There was more black eyes and skinned noses in Squan Creek for the next four weeks than New York could ever boast of, and the hair and buttons didn't stop flyin' around the streets until after the first fall of snow. No effort was ever made to resurrect the debatin' society. All felt that if they couldn't agree on the shape of the earth they surely couldn't agree on anything else. They went back to Dan Parker's grocery of an evening and sat around on the counters and barrels and boxes, and the lies they had told before were only yarns in comparison to those they told afterwards. The first evening Deacon Spooner got out and come down Bill Shaffer told a lie about being cast away in the polar regions for 17 years. It was a beautiful lie—sleek, slick and full of juice, and when it was finished the deacon clasped his hands together, raised his tearful eyes to the ceiling and said:

"How good, and how like old times! I did think a debatin' society would be a good thing to lift us up and send us forward on the wave of progress, but we don't need it. We can outlie anything on the face of the airth, and we don't care a kuss whether the world is round or flat!"

**Information Wanted.**

"Will you have some of the sugarcured ham?" asked the landlady.

"What was it cured of?" asked the new boarder, suspiciously.—Up to Date.

**A RELIGION TEST.**

How a Mountaineer Was to Prove His Qualifications for Church Membership.

"I was away upon the headwaters of the Big Sandy recently," said the shoe drummer, "and I discovered something new, even in that land of yesterday and eventfulness. I was riding along a creek valley where I was told lived a mountain preacher who had a practical idea of what religion should do for those who experienced it and adopted odd ways of putting his ideas into practice. As I reached a rise in the road I saw at the bottom a young man driving a pig into a potato patch and before I could reach him he had followed the pig through the narrow gate and was trying to drive it out again. It struck me as a peculiar proceeding, and when I came opposite the gate I pulled up my horse and sat watching the young fellow and the pig. If you never tried to get a pig out of a potato patch you can form no idea of what a job it is, and as I watched this young mountaineer patiently chasing the pig hither and you, getting it well headed toward the gate only to have it double on him and go back into the patch again, time after time, I began to wonder what manner of youth this was that had come into the mountains. Finally he brought it over very carefully, and as he got it almost out, it gave a sudden grunt and dodge, and into the patch again it went.

"Gosh dang the hog," he said, puffing and blowing and mopping his face with his short sleeve.

"Why didn't you say that before?" I asked, laughing.

"Excuse me, stranger," he said, noticing me for the first time, "I didn't see you was thar," and he blushed violently and seemed to be greatly confused.

"Oh, that's all right," I hastened to say. "I only wonder you didn't cuss the lord out of him."

"Well, I reckon I don't ker a darn," he said. "I done the best I knowed."

"How do you mean?" I inquired, catching an idea of the situation all at once.

"You don't know it, I reckon, bein' a stranger in these parts," he said, "but Elder Martin sot me to doin' that to see ef I wuz ripe fer religion yit. I've had a notion fer about a year past that I ought to be j'inin' the church, and I told Elder Martin, and he said ez how he had doubts yit ef I wuz ripe, and he said ef I'd drive one of Sam Yates' razerbacks outen pap's tater patch without cussin' a oath I wuz ripe and that's what I been a-doin'."

"Judging by what I heard you say awhile ago I should say you were not ripe," I said, laughing at his explanation and manner of it.

"Oh," he exclaimed, "that ain't no sign. I'm jis' practicin'. The real thing don't come off till next week Sunday at quarterly meetin'."—Washington Star.

**DISHES OF BUTTERMILK.**

Cake and Bread Made in the Following Way Are Very Palatable.

A simple and yet delicious cake is made with a cup of buttermilk and no eggs. To prepare it, cream one cup of sugar and half a cup of butter; then stir in a cup of fresh buttermilk, after sifting two cups of flour, with an even teaspoonful of soda, two or three times, and gradually stir the mixture of buttermilk, sugar and butter in the sifted soda and flour. Stir finally a cup of washed and seeded raisins, half a teaspoonful of cloves, and half a grated nutmeg. Beat it up quickly and thoroughly, and pour it at once into a round loaf cake tin, and bake it in a moderately hot oven. When the cake is done set it, in the tin in which it was baked, in a pan of cold water until thoroughly cooled. Frost it with any simple frosting. This cake is better when eaten the day it is cooked, as, unlike some other kinds of rich cake, it does not improve with age.

Buttermilk bread is made of sour buttermilk. It is an old-fashioned delicious bread. To make two small loaves, use a pint of sour buttermilk brought to the boiling point, and poured while boiling hot over a tablespoonful of sugar in an earthen breadbowl. Sift a liberal pint of flour gradually into the mixture, beating it all the time. Beat thoroughly, and cover closely overnight, leaving it in a warm room. In the morning dissolve half a teaspoonful of soda in two tablespoonfuls of boiling water, and add it to the batter with an even teaspoonful of salt and a heaping one of butter, melted. Beat these ingredients in very thoroughly, then beat in a cup more of sifted flour. Sift half a cup more flour to use in kneading; sprinkle a kneading-board with some of this flour. Knead the bread for 20 minutes, and divide it into two small loaves. Put these in buttered pans, and bake in a hot oven immediately. It requires about three-quarters of an hour to bake it through.—N. Y. Tribune.

**Early Satisfied.**

Minister (who has taken a house in the country for the summer)—But, my good man, I have brought my servants with me. I have no employment to give you.

Applicant—Ah, sir, if you only knew how little work it would take to keep me employed.—Tit-Bits.