

John Aisley Master Chief Arthur Somers Roche Copyright 1924, NEA Service, Inc. LEGERDEMAIN

It was, I flattered myself, a quaint conceit, as sane as most revolutionary nostrums, and I was smiling as I entered Caro's. I was still smiling as I finished a very satisfactory meal, and leaning back in my chair, consumed my fifth cigarette. Life was not a comedy thing, after all. At least, if one didn't find it simple, one simply stepped out of its absurd complexities.

For instance, that girl who sat across the narrow room from me would be doubtably better off if she joined me in my stroll to the dock than if she remained with the gross beast who was her dinner companion. For she patiently showed that he disgusted her. Pretty, tremulous, with black hair and blue eyes, and I guessed from what appeared above the table, a charming figure, she belonged to youth, not to bloated age.

And the fact that her eyes were hard and mercenary made no difference. They were so merely because advantages had been denied her. I could discern the attentions of her companion sickened her.

Although I could see her shrink at such of his flabby hand upon her cheek she did not push it away. She smiled, and apparently answered terms of agreement with verbal caresses. Unquestionably he was rich. I was to share his wealth. Well, I was to be about to leave a world where things were endured.

I lifted my hand to beckon to my friend. Then I dropped it, for into the came my fur-collared friend, adding to the table where that girl who had excited my disgust, greeting them cordially, being delighted.

I wondered if these were part of the plan which I suspected must be associated with him. Then, noting a meaningful glance exchanged between him and the girl, I knew that while she might be an associate of his, her gross companion, if not already a victim, destined to be one. I postponed my departure.

As I watched the three, the gross man produced a little box from his waistcoat pocket. It was the sort of box that would contain a ring, and the sight of it evoked memories. I wondered that had not recognized the huge-featured man before. For years I had more than once entered his jewelry establishment on Fifth avenue. I knew him to be Daragon, one of the most famous jew-

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ADVENTURES OF THE TWINS Olive Roberts Barton



NO. 18—JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT

"That suits me exactly," said a solemn voice.

"Come on," cried Johnny Jump Up, the merry little garden fairy. "Aren't you dressed yet?"

"Well, be there in a minute," said Nancy. "Where are we going to-night, Johnny?"

"I don't think we'll go any place unless we can find the titmouse," said Johnny. "He seems to have disappeared altogether. That's why I want you Twins to hurry—so we can hunt him."

The Twins put on the little shoes that Johnny Jump Up gave them and instantly they became as small as pepper-corns, if you know how small that is.

Then down they slid to the magic garden.

"Tommy, ah Tommy Titmouse, where are you?" they called.

All the little violet fairies hunted, and the little Dutchman in the tulip hunted, and the little Scotchman in the blue bells hunted, and the little French fairy in the pansies hunted. But no one had seen Tommy. Not even the big black beetle knew where he was.

"We can't go on a journey to-night," said Johnny Jump Up. "We'll have to give it up."

"That suits me exactly," said a solemn voice. "Now I'll have a chance to give my lecture."

And looking where the voice came from, everybody was surprised to see Jack-in-the-Pulpit standing under his canopy and looking as solemn as a preacher.

"Sit down, everybody," said Jack. "So Nancy and Nick and Johnny Jump Up and all the other garden fairies sat down on the ground to listen."

"My lecture is on the moon," said Jack.

"The moon is round except when it isn't. Sometimes it's just a slice. Sometimes it's right side up, and sometimes it's wrong side up, and sometimes it's standing on end."

"The moon shines only at night," said Jack.

"No, it doesn't always," said Nick. "I've often seen it in the day time. If you look hard you can see it right in the blue sky."

"But it doesn't shine. It just reflects the moon's light. As I said before—the moon shines only at night."

"The man in the moon is baldheaded and fat and jolly and—"

"Oh, say, said Johnny Jump Up, "Did you hear the verse I made up about him?"

"No," said Jack-in-the-Pulpit stiffly. "This was it," said Johnny. And he recited:

"The man in the moon is so short and so fat, He can't bend over this way or stoop over that. He has not seen his feet since the First of July. But he says that his shape so there's no use to try."

"The lecture is over for to-night," said Jack-in-the-Pulpit. "Just then there was a loud snore, and there was Tommy Titmouse on the pussy willow fast asleep."

"Better wake up, Tommy, a cat will get you," said Nick.

(To be continued.)

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