

THE DUDE IN THE LUMBER CAMP.

A Narrative of Facks, by "Josiah the Truthful."



ROUND the lumber shanty fire, one cold and stormy night,
The boys were gathered to enjoy the genial heat and light;
And pipes of sundry shades and strengths were sending forth a cloud,
That filled the place with fragrance blue and nearly hid the crowd.

A rude and wholesome supper had, as usual, closed the day,
And now for these big brawny chaps has come the hour of play;
And the special form of pastime to-night is spinning yarns,
At which the champion, sans dispute, is huge Josiah Barnes.

Josiah had a giant form and a very solemn face,
And told the toughest stories that found utterance in the place;
But he told 'em as the gospel truth, with ne'er a ghost of smile,
As "ackshell facks he'd know'd hisself," and air devoid of guile.

"I guess I never tole you 'bout that dude we had up here,
A-livin' in the shanty as a hand the other year?"
And looking slowly round the crowd he met a general shout
Of negatives, politely backed with cries of "Spit it out!"

"Well," said Josiah the Truthful, "You see His Dandyship,
He came up to the limit that summer fer a trip,
And camped out with a party of o'her dudes from town,
Jest nigh the river yender, to git their skins done brown.

"You'd see 'em out a-fishin', or bathin'—every one
A-holdin' up their faces and bare arms to the sun;
They on'y had a fortnight, and wanted it to 'pear
They'd bin away a-roughin' it abroad fer 'bout a year.

"Well, in about two weeks or so they all went back agin
Exceptin' this here rooster, a feller small and thin,
With legs jes like two matches and a little red mustache,
A-wearin' a blazer jacket and a belly-band, or sash.

"He took a sort of notion he'd like the shanty work,
And it would be more helthy ner bein' a bank clerk,
So our foreman reely hired him—to let him have his sling—
A-loggin' all the winter and a-drivin' in the spring.

"Fast night he said he liked it, tho' he did feel ruther tired,
But he was bound to stick it through all season now he'd hired;
And yit, tho' he was hungry es a wolf from extry work,
You'd ought to saw him squirmen' at the fat and salty pork!

"He couldn't go it nohow, and the thick merlasses stuff
Was too many fer his feelins,' he sed 'twas "wather woff,"
So he riz up from the table and went and told the chief,
He'd take some maple syrup, or tenderloin of beef.

"I grieve to state our fellers didn't seem to symperthise
With him, and frequent used to knock his eyeglass off his eyes;
And when that fust night he sot down and lit a cigarette,
Jim Bludso held a pistol, boys, and made him swaller it!

"Our chaps they didn't like his ways—too much of lawdy-daw,
And it made 'em mad and vicious whenever he said 'aw!'
So they done their best to cure him and make him walk aright,
By tossin' him in blankets and so forth every night.

"And then their efforts at reform in day-time didn't slack,
Out in the woods they'd frequent drop a snowball down his back;
Or set him hitchin' up the mules, not mentionin' their tricks,
Which led, es they intended, to a few improvin' kicks.

"Now, thinkin' it all over I'm free to say that Dude
Was treated in a manner that bordered on the rude,
And I can't help a-feeling some pity in my heart
When I remember how he finally—er—sorter—went apart.

"He never was a favorit around the lumber camp
Es you kin guess from wot I've said—too much of "swagger" stamp;
But then agin the luck he had, jes' like hisself, was slim,
And I am reely sorry fer—wot is left of him.

"He's livin' in the city now, or leastwise his remains
Resides down there quite healthy, his body, head and brains—
The rest of him is scattered round the limit more or less,
Tho' they've got a portion of him at the hospertal, I guess.

"The fust slight break he made was when he went to cut a tree
And let the ax slip somehow and chopped a foot off, see?
And as he lay a-groanin' he didn't lay quite clear,
And another bit of timber fell and kinder took an ear.

"Yet still he didn't leave us, he certainly had grit,
But about a fortnight later his skull got somewhat split;
I can't tell how it happen'd fer the facks got mixed, you know,
With his losin' of the other leg by an accidental blow.

"And yet he stayed on with us and seemed to gain and thrive,
Till in the spring we started down the river with the drive,
But when we struck the rapids the logs jammed, as they will,
And he got both arms a-mangled in the mix-up and the spill.

"They took him to the city where them arms was amputated,
And subsequent he lost an eye—or so I've heerd it stated.
There's nothin' left to tell about, 'er I will close right here
By statin' thet he hain't a dude no more sense that same year."

—J. W. BENGOUGH.

