

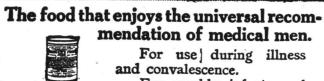
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forbade the men to raise their axes again.

It was evident that the difficulty could not be settled without the services of a third party, and Hiram took the gang-boss down to Lawyer Spence, to whom he made complaint of wilful and malicious tres-

"But, Hiram," said the man of law, "you signed an agreement with Mr. Ormond,

did you not? signed a paper lettin' him play the fool with chips up to my place, but it wa'n't a lumberin' contract."

"It was a specific agreement, Hiram, be-tween you, of the first part, and him, of the second part, his heirs, administrators, and assigns, to the effect that in consideration of one hundred dollars, duly paid, you transferred, granted, and assigned to him the exclusive rights and privileges of either cutting or smelling, or both cutting and smelling, wood chips on your property, to which you further agreed to allow him free access at any time in the exercise of the privileges thus conveyed. I have the document in my desk, Hiram."

"It don't say anything 'bout cuttin' trees. Chips ain't whole trees."

"As to that, I have no doubt Mr. Ormond will contend, and quite rightly, that his men have been cutting chips. In the cutting of those chips the trees have been felled, but the articles of agreement omit to specify just where or how the chips are to be cut. He therefore concludes, I take it, that he may cut them as he may

"He sha'n't do it! You've got to take the law of him!"

Lawyer Spence here dismissed the woodchopper, and then, alone with his would-be client, opened to thim the real inwardness

of the case. "No, Hiram, instead of law for him it's medicine for you. It's been coming to you a long time back. I shall have to tell you, to begin with, that your own greed

and inquisitiveness are to blame for this. You've been getting more tight-fisted every year, Hiram, and I'm sorry to say you have quite often made yourself a nuisance by your habit of prying into things. Your tight fists and your inquiring mind have at last got you into

trouble. 'I suppose your election as Councillor led up to it, since you seem to have felt an official obligation to look into this man's doings; but the real beginning of the case is the way you acted last spring about those birch trees of yours. You will remember, of course, that soon after the election you had a call from the buyer of a wood-working concern in the city, who offered to buy the trees as they stood, for the lumber in them, and pay you five hundred dollars in the spring. You agreed to sell at that price, but afterward got it in your head that it wasn't enough, and when the buyer returned a few months later you wanted several hundred dollars more. He wouldn't pay it, and fell through. But the factory people determined to have those trees, and in due course they began fresh negotiations for

"No," objected Braddy, "I ain't heard

a word from them since.

"Of course not; they know you too well. But they sent this man Ormond to bring you to time, and it looks as if he has done it. Ormond is one of the firm, and very fond of a joke. He came to see me when he got here, and told me he was going to get square with you for going back on your agreement. He wasn't quite sure how he would do it, for he hadn't the lay of the land yet; but he seemed to know your reputation pretty well. Mark you, I had nothing to do with it. I told him he would have to work it out himself, for I was a lawyer, not a joker. And he got

"He came to me again last Mondaynight, and told me how his scheme had succeeded. You see, he had guessed that your curiosity would let out sooner or later, and had been laying for you all the time-wouldn't talk to other people, but while drawing attention to himself by his little game he was really baiting for you; and you hooked the bait even better than he expected, for you made him out at first a German spy. I laughed at that chip story, Hiram, and how you swallowed it. Then he left me the paper you had signed. He said he was going back to Winnipeg, and would send a bunch of men to begin cutting."

anything of the kind had been done, and "Or you, Hiram. I would like to sympathise with you, but you really don't deserve it. This agreement, now, gives Ormond and his company the right to get in on your wood lot, and so long as he makes chips in doing it he will be quite safe in cutting anything he pleases. He has paid you a hundred dollars for the privilege, and he will probably keep on till he

has cut down the whole grove."
"But I won't let him take them away,"
declared Braddy. "That paper don't say
he can take anything off the premises."

"As to that, he is willing to pay you the other four hundred dollars and complete the purchase as originally intended. You would have hard work to find another market as good." "I'll let the logs rot first That paper's

a fake!"

"No, Hiram, it isn't a fake. The transaction is a little unusual, and might not hold very well if it went to court, but there is enough good law in it to get you badly twisted and keep things tied up for some time. Understand, I am not responsible for it; but just the same, my advice to you is to take the rest of the money—I can close the deal with you at once—and not try to fight it. For if you do that, the story of how you were stung by the chipbug will make you a bigger joke than he was himself. Besides, you should be ashamed of having gone back on your word in the first place.

Councillor Braddy, no longer bold and defiant, sat with bent head and pondered the lawyer's advice. It was not to his

liking, but he saw its force.
"I'll do it," he said at length. "Butthe people will find out about it anyway."

"I expect they will, Hiram," replied Lawyer Spence, not at all comfortingly. "But that is a part of the cure, and you'll have to take your medicine. The day the chip-bug made a more desirable citizen of you will be remembered as a good day for Woodport. You owe it to the public."

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Their catalogue will be ready for mailing shortly after the first of the year, and as it is easily worth while having, a request mailed now to The F. S. Newman "D'ye mean that all that fuss with the chips was just makin' himself out a fool—" Company, Limited, Winnipeg, will assure a copy being sent.