

THE UNFORTUNATE PREVIOUSNESS OF TOOTHPICK JOHNSON, BY DAN QUINN.

YOU sees," observed the Old Cattleman, as he rapped the ashes from his pipe preliminary to refreshing it with another consignment of tobacco, "you sees this yere Tootpick disgraces Wolfville; that's how it is. Downs a party, Tootpick does, an' no gun on the gent, the same bein' plum out o' roole. Nacherally,

while no one blames Tootpick, who makes the play, what these law sharps calls bony fids, the public sort o' longs for his 'lovement. An' that settles it; Tootpick has to line out for different stampin' grounds.

"It all comes from Tootpick bein' by nature one of these yere over-zealous people. He's born eager, Tootpick is, an' can't he'p it none.

"You-all has tracked up on that breed of Cimarron plenty frequent now, I makes no doubt. They're the kind who in poker, for instance, picks up their hands, kyard by kyard, as they comes. They're that for'ard that, headlong to get outen the present an' into the future, they jest can't wait for things to have a chance to happen.

"Why ever do you pull in your kyards that away? I says to Tootpick one time reprovin' of him. 'Why can't you let 'em lay till the hand's dealt?'"

"Which I'm shorely that loosed to look if I ain't got three aces or some sech," says Tootpick, "I must turn 'em up to see."

"Well," says I, an' the same is wisdom every time, 'you-all would appear more like a dead game sport to let 'em be, an' pick up your whole hand together. Likewise you'd display a mighty sight more savy if you'd keep your eyes on the dealer till he lays down the deck. You'd be less afflicted by disagreeable surprises if you'd freeze to the last idea, an' lay up money besides."

"But that's the notion I'm aimin' to convey. Tootpick is too quick. His intellect, it looks like is on eternal tip-toe to get in its stack.

"He's too simultaneous, Tootpick is," says Jack Moore once, when him an' Boggs is descourin' together sizin' up Tootpick. 'He's that simultaneous he comes might near bein' premtoor."

"What does Tootpick do that time we all wearies of him an' stampedes him? Why, it's this away. It's what one might call a accidental killin'."

"It's second drink time in the evenin', an' the Tucson stage is in. That's a passel of us who has roped up our mall romancin' 'round in front of Red Light, breakin' into letters an' papers, an' a makin' of comments, when along wanders a party who's new to the camp. As the deal turns he never does stay long enough to become what you might call a genial 'quaintance of any of us.

"This party who comes trallin' up is, as we hears, late from Red Dog, and durin' the few days previous wherein he confers his society onto us he stays drunk habitual an' never do a lapse into bein' sober for a second.

"Of course, however, his nose-pain' is his own 'know about lickin' may have in it may not; I don't go pryin' into his past 'ole to determine. But as you readily descerns, it keeps up a barrier



"ARMED WITH NOTHIN' BUT RED LIGHT WHISKEY."

ain bein' plumb intimate with him, an' ontill Tootpick opens on him, his intercourse with Wolfville is nacherally only formal.

"This sot from Red Dog—which Red Dog itse'f is about as low flung a bunch of criminals as ever was rounded up an' called a camp—but as I'm sayin', this totterin' inebriate I mentions comes straggling up more or less permisic an' vague; an' without sayin' a word or makin' a sign, or even shakin' a bush, stands about the length of a lariat away an' stares at Tootpick; battin' and blinkin' his eyes mighty malevolent.

"It ain't no time when this yere bluff on the part of the drinkin' Red Dog gent attracts Tootpick who's ben pirootin' 'round among us where we're standin', an' is at that time mentionin' drinks as a good thing to get, to Dave Tutt.

"Who be you-all admirin' now?" asks Tootpick of the Red Dog party who's glarin' toward him. At the same time I notes the lights begin to dance in Tootpick's eyes, an' I sees with that impulsive sperrit of his he's due to keep dead abreast of any procession that starts.

"The Red Dog gent don't make no retort, but stands thar with his eyes picketed on Tootpick

goin' to be some shootin'. I don't know why none. But that's common about shootin's when two times in three nobody ever does know why.

"I reckon now it's Tootpick's fidgitin' that away makes me suspicious he's on the brink of rousin' the o'caston with his six-shooter. Now if he was cool an' clammy it would never come to me that way, 'cause a cool gent never pulls the first gun, leastwise when the pretext is frivolous an' don't come under the head of business.

"Well," says Tootpick agin, 'whatever be you all gloatin' over, I asks? Or mebbly you're thinkin' of 'doptin' me as a brother or somethin', says Tootpick.

"Still the party from Red Dog don't say nothin'. As Tootpick ceases, however, he makes a move which is reasonable quick for his hip. He's got on a long coat, an' while no gent can see, thar's none of us has doubts but he is fully dressed that away an' that he's searchin' out his colt's.

"That's what Tootpick figures an' the Red Dog party's hand aint travelled two inches under his surtout, when bang! goes Tootpick's 44, an' the Red Dog party hits the ground face down, like a kyard just dealt.

"Yes, he's dead enough; never does kick or fluter once. It was a centre shot.

"Do you all note how he tries to fill his hand on me?" asks Tootpick, mighty cheerful, as he approaches the remainder.

Tootpick stoops down for the Red Dog man's gun, an' what do you all think? He don't have no weapon, none whatever; nothin' more vehement than a flask of whiskey, which the same is still all safe in his rear pocket.

"He warn't heeled," says Tootpick, straightenin' up an' lookin' at us apologetic an' disgusted. 'Never armed with nothin' but Red Light whiskey.'

"It's due to Tootpick to say I never yet cuts the trail of a gent who's more abashed an' discouraged than he is when he finds his victim aint packin' no gun. He surveys the remainder a second an' says:

"Boys, if ever the liker for the camp is on Tootpick Johnson, it's now. But thar's one last dooty to perform touchin' deceased. It's evident departed was about to ask me to drink. It's this yere motion he makes for his whiskey which I mistakes for a gun play. Thar I errs an' stacks up the Red Dog person wrong. Now that I understands, while acknowledgin' my error, the least I can do is respect the last wishes of deceased. I therefore," says Tootpick, raisin' the Red Dog party's flask to where it'll do the most good, 'complies with what would, if I hadn't interrupted him, have been the last request of departed. An' while regrettin' I don't savy sooner, I drinks to him."

"No," concluded the Old Cattleman, "as I intimates at the go-off, Tootpick don't stay long after that. No one talks of stringin' him for what's a plain case of bad judgment, an' nothin' more. But Wolfville takes a notion again him after that, an' don't want him 'round none. So he has to line out.

"You all are all right, Tootpick, speakin' general," says old Sam Enright, when him an' Doc Peets an' Jack Moore trails up on Tootpick to notify him it's the Stranglers' idee he'd better pack his freight an' pull it, 'but you don't hold your six-shooter enough in what Doc Peets yere calls 'abeyance.' Without puttin' no stain on your character, it's right to say you aint sedentary enough, an' are a heap too quick besides for this camp. In view, tharfore, of what I states an' of you all droppin' this yere Red Dog gent—not an ounce of iron on him at the time—while we exonerates, we decide without a dissentin' vote to sort o' look 'round the camp for you to-morry, say at sundown, an' hang you a whole lot should you then be here. That's how the kyards lays in the box, Tootpick, an' if you're anxious to commit suicide you'll be present in our midst at the hour I names."

DAN QUINN.

(OUT HERE)

CHORUS.

Oh! is yer mam-mie - al-ways with ye Su - sie, Su - sie Ann?

Won't ye come a - way to hear what a wants for to

tole ye? Won't yer try to slip de la - dy, sure - ly Sue ye

can? Is yer mam-mie al-ways with ye - Is she with ye

now ma Su - sie... Ann?

IS YER MAMMIE ALWAYS WITH YE?

BY LESLIE STUART.

SUNG BY **EUGENE STRATTON**

THE NEW YORK JOURNAL'S MUSICAL SUPPLEMENT.