

## IX.

### A CRUISE IN A SOAP-BUBBLE.

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#### PART I.

##### ONE-DIMENSION SPACE.

WHETHER the mouse ever really did run up the clock or not, I do not know; all I can say is, if she did, 't was of course merely to see the time, and Mother Goose has made altogether too much talk about it.

If it had not been for this talk, the boys would never have had such outlandish names. Their father and mother — good Mr. and Mrs. Dock — had christened them William and Henry, as the parish register would testify; yet, despite this fact, nobody in all Charmington, where they lived, ever thought of calling them anything but Hickory and Dickory Dock.

The boys themselves cared not a fig; they answered to the names without question, and so when, one afternoon, Hickory shouted from the bottom of the stairs, "Come on, Dickory! mother says we can go!" his younger brother never stopped

to think what name he was called, but sprang up, dropped his book, clapped on his ragged straw hat, slid down the balusters, and landing at the front door beside his brother, cried breathlessly, —

“All right; come on! You get the towels, and I’ll bring the soap!” Dickory always carried a huge piece of soap to make *foam*, as he called it, in the water.

He knew in a minute what Hickory meant: they were going to the brook to swim. Their mother usually let them go every day when the weather was fine, for the brook was quite near the house, the water was not deep, and, as she often said, nothing could possibly happen to them.

It was a hot, sultry afternoon; scarcely a breath of wind swayed the tall meadow-grass as they trudged along. The cows looked lazily at them from the shade of the chestnut-trees, and the very brook rippled and gurgled drowsily in the bright sunlight. The boys were in high glee. They stripped off their clothes and hung them on the alder-bushes; they ran and bounded over the green banks, plunged into the sparkling pool, pelted each other with tiny pebbles, lashed the water with osier switches, and dived after the fleeting minnows, until one would have thought they were veritable water-sprites instead of flesh-and-blood boys.

Suddenly Dickory bethought him of his soap. He ran up the bank to get it, and straightway set

to dashing and splashing it about in the water, until he was surrounded with white, foamy lather. In fact, he had made soap-suds of the whole brook.

“Hurrah! hurrah!” cried Hickory. “I’ll tell you what to do: we can make soap-bubbles;” and diving into the bushes, he presently came forth with a long hollow reed, one end of which he thrust into the water, and began to blow through the other.

Sure enough, the next minute a huge soap-bubble rose from the foamy brook. Both boys cried out with wonder and admiration. Hickory kept on blowing bubble after bubble, until Dickory stood in the middle of the brook quite surrounded by big globes glowing with all the colors of the rainbow. He was enchanted; he dared not stir lest he should break them and destroy the fairy spectacle.

“Now,” said Hickory, “I am going to take in a long, long breath, and blow a tremendous one right in the middle.”

“Stop, stop!” cried Dickory. “You can’t; that’s where I’m standing; there is n’t room here; you’ll break all the others!”

But Hickory would not heed him; he plunged the reed deeper down into the water, shut his eyes, puffed out his cheeks, and blew with all his might and main.

“Stop! There, there, see what you’re doing!

Why, what's the matter? I — I can't see you. Where — where are you? Hickory! Hick-o-ry!"

Poor Dickory! those were the last words he could utter. Terror and astonishment made him dumb. A film floated before his eyes, spread all around him, and mounting aloft, closed above his head. He did not realize what was happening until it was too late, until he found himself cased in a gigantic soap-bubble, which, rising from the earth like a balloon, soared away through the air.

Through the filmy, transparent sides of his vapory prison he could see, far below him, the green meadows and the babbling brook, looking now like a silver thread, and Hickory standing there with his hands upraised, growing smaller and smaller every minute, until he became a mere speck and then vanished altogether.

Now above, around, below, there was nothing to be seen; he seemed to be sailing through an airy sea in his crystalline ship.

When he came fairly to realize his situation, he was almost beside himself with grief and fright. He wept and wept and called for his mother and father and Hickory, until from sheer exhaustion he could cry no more. Then, crouching down in the bottom of his aerial vessel, he grew calmer and began to wonder what was going to become of him.

Presently he found himself surrounded by large fleecy objects, which he soon perceived to be

clouds. Anon these began to glow with magnificent colors, — crimson and purple and gold, — and then he knew the sun must be setting; but all the time up, up he flew, far beyond the clouds, while the sky grew every moment darker, until he could hardly see.

By and by a light began to shine from behind. It became brighter and brighter. Turning to see whence it came, Dickory beheld, to his inexpressible terror, a monstrous blazing ball of fire which seemed to be coming directly towards him. He knew at once it must be the moon; and he thought he was surely going to float straight into it and be burned up. After a while, however, he saw that it was still an immense distance away, and he grew calm again.

A long, long time now elapsed, during which Dickory kept speeding on his way; and the moon meanwhile, after circling around him, began to go down, down, down, until it sank quite out of sight, and Dickory thought it must have dropped into the sea.

But he was not left long to ponder that question, when his attention was drawn to the stars. Now that the moon was gone, they shone out magnificently. Dickory had no idea before how big and bright they were. There was the glittering Northern Crown set thick with gems, the gigantic Great Bear with his splendid tail, the golden Lyre, the monstrous Dragon coiled in and out

among the rest, Berenice's Hair all glittering with diamond-dust, beautiful Cassiopeia reclining in her easy-chair, the shining Eagle with outstretched wings, and Job's Coffin with its gilded nails.

Suddenly, while Dickory was lost in wonder at these marvellous constellations, and all around was dead silence, there came a dreadful, rushing, hissing sound, which filled the whole sky with thundering echoes, and a flaming serpent with a long, long tail streamed through the air so close to Dickory that he sprang up and shrieked with terror.

After it was gone, and he had recovered from his fright, however, Dickory knew what it was. He knew it must have been a shooting-star. His mother had often shown them to him streaming across the sky; but he never thought they could be so terrible as this.

At length, quite worn out with all his fatigue and excitement, Dickory fell asleep. When he awoke, he thought he must have slept for days and days, it seemed so long and long ago since he took the bath in the brook and Hickory blew the soap-bubbles.

Now the clouds, the moon, the stars, and the darkness were all gone. All about him was a golden haze. It was so bright that at first he had to cover his eyes. Still above, below, around, on every side, nothing was to be seen, nothing to be

heard. Dickory rose to his feet, stretched the cramp out of his limbs, and thought of his mother's nice breakfast-table and how he should like to be sitting down to it as usual. This remembrance made him hungry; and indeed he was just beginning to wonder how he was ever going to get anything to eat again, when he was startled by seeing the sides of his bubble-car contract as if yielding to some outside pressure. Slowly and steadily they continued to close in upon him, until just as they were about to touch his face — bang! — *there was a loud explosion, and the soap-bubble burst.*

Instead, however, of falling with frightful rapidity through the air, as he expected, Dickory only fell a couple of feet and landed upon a soft greensward. Here he lay for a time in a half-stupor, the golden haze still enveloping him, so that he could see nothing. He listened, however, and heard afar off a murmuring sound which seemed every minute to come nearer and louder. Presently it increased to a shrill tumult.

All at once the haze cleared away. Dickory rubbed his eyes and looked about. He saw himself surrounded by a multitude of tall thin objects. He could not make them out. They looked at first like a forest of very tall knitting-needles; but as they were all in motion, he saw they must be alive. Looking closer, he discovered that they wore clothes, and then he knew they must be living creatures. They appeared, moreover, to be in a

state of intense excitement, and steadily approaching him. Looking about for a place of retreat, he saw himself hemmed in on every side by countless multitudes of these strange beings.

He began to be very uncomfortable, and wished himself back in the soap-bubble, when suddenly an exceedingly tall and thin individual, who looked for all the world like a huge exclamation point, stepped forth from the throng and asked in a voice as shrill as a fife, —

“Who are you?”

“I am a person,” said Dickory, with dignity.

“What is that?”

“I don’t know,” returned Dickory, much puzzled; “it’s a — a — why, it’s just a person, and that’s all.”

The strange creature went back and consulted with the others, and presently returned, saying, —

“That won’t do; you must explain who you are.”

“I am Dickory Dock.”

“Who gave you leave to come here?”

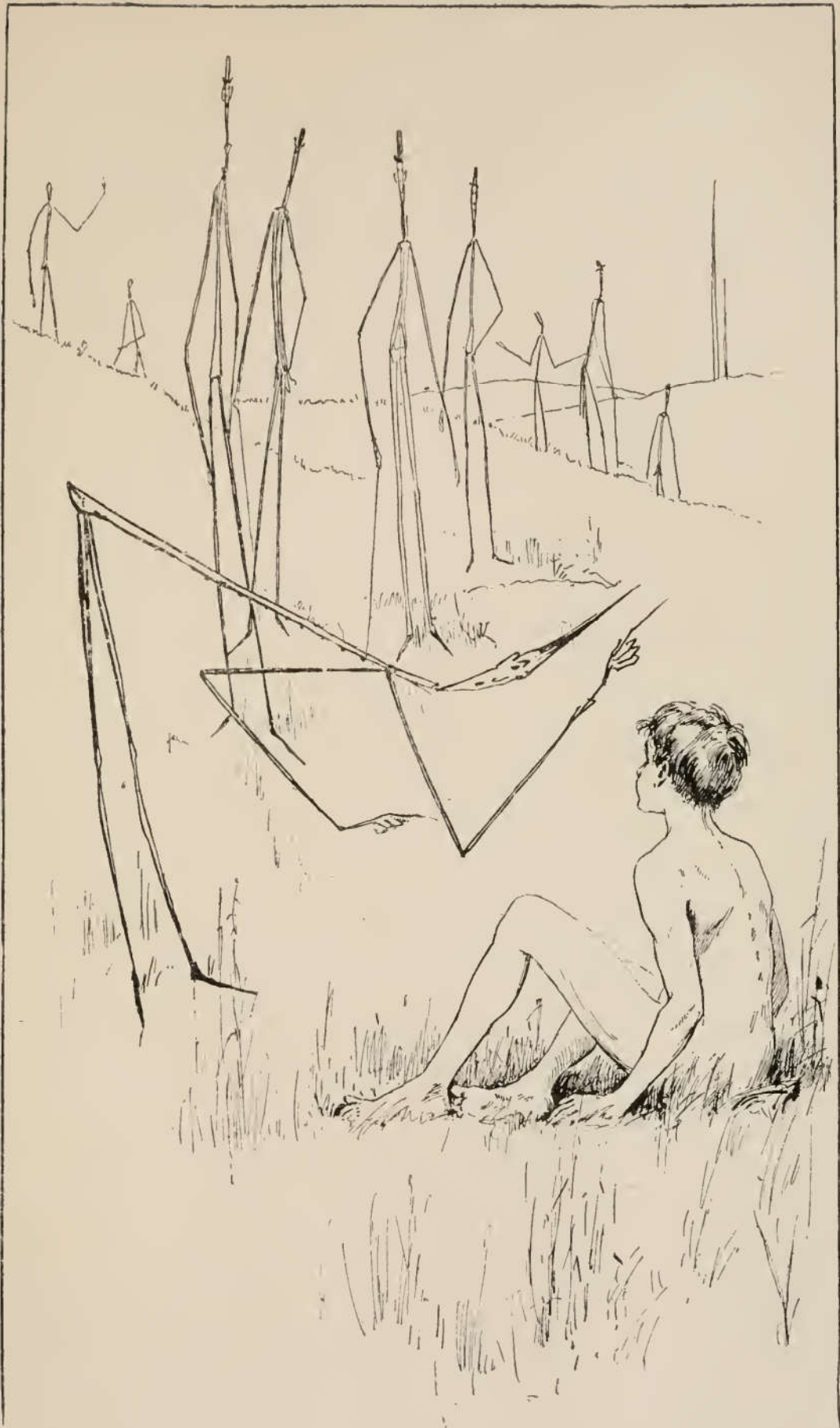
“No-o-body,” faltered Dickory, who did not like the forbidding aspect of his new acquaintance.

“Well, don’t you ever dare do it again!” screamed the indignant Exclamation Point.

“No-o, no-o; please, I won’t. I did n’t want to. I could n’t help it. I told Hickory not to.”

A threatening murmur went up from the whole





“WHO ARE YOU?”

multitude, which became fiercer in proportion as Dickory was mild and apologetic. Thereupon Dickory, who had thus far been sitting, became alarmed and rose to his feet. At sight of his bulk the strange people were seized with alarm, and fled to some distance.

But Dickory, who after a moment's reflection concluded that any company was better than none, beckoned and made signs of friendship; and they slowly and cautiously returned.

"Can you tell me the way home?" asked Dickory of the Exclamation Point, when the latter came within hearing.

The stranger shook his head.

"Where is this place?" pursued Dickory.

"This is the great kingdom of Thin Man's Land," squeaked the stranger.

"Are all the people like you?"

"Yes."

"What makes you so queer?"

"Queer!" echoed the Exclamation Point, indignantly, "we're *not* queer; this is the way people ought to look."

Dickory looked down at his own chubby arms and legs, and was puzzled. At length he raised his eyes, and pointing to some tall objects in the distance, asked, —

"What are those things?"

"Those are the palaces of the nobility."

"Houses!" cried Dickory, in astonishment;

“they look like fishing-rods. Can you get into them?”

“Of course,” returned the stranger, scornfully.

“This is an awful funny country. What — makes everything so — so thin?”

“This is the land of one dimension.”

“Dimension?” repeated Dickory, overawed by such a long word.

“Yes, one *way*; don’t you understand? People and things can only grow in one direction, — length. We have no breadth nor thickness here. Our wise men tell us there *are* countries where they have those dimensions. Now we see what they mean. You must be one of those frightful people.”

“Eh?”

“Is everybody so swollen up and deformed where you live?” asked the Thin Man.

“I ’m not swollen up and deformed!” returned Dickory, indignantly. “Where I live, the people are a good deal bigger than me; I ’m only a little boy.”

“Horrible!” exclaimed the Thin Man, with a shudder, and he was about to turn away to tell his people, when Dickory plucked up courage to say:

“Can’t you give me something to eat, please? I have n’t had any breakfast.”

“What do you eat?”

“Bread and butter.”

“What is that?”

“That? Why, that is food,” returned Dickory, staring.

The Thin Man went and spoke with his people, a dozen of whom started off and soon returned with something to eat.

Dickory looked at what they brought in astonishment. There were several kinds of food, but all in the same shape, — in thin little sticks like vermicelli, only a great deal thinner and smaller. Dickory saw the reason of this when he looked at their mouths, which were like little dots. He took the food, however, thankfully enough, and ate it all up in a trice. It was not so much all together as a good mouthful of beefsteak. But while Dickory was thinking how little there was, the Thin Men murmured in astonishment at his enormous appetite. Next they brought him some drink in long hollow straws. It was a kind of sweetened water. Dickory emptied twenty of these straws before his thirst was quenched.

Just then there was a commotion in the crowd; two messengers arrived from the king, who had heard of the coming of the strange visitor, and was on his way to see him. In a few minutes, accordingly, a burst of very shrill music was heard, the crowd set up a chorus of deafening squeaks, and his Majesty arrived.

He was attended by his body-guard, who were the tallest men Dickory had seen yet, and all dressed in red, while the king, who was accounted

the handsomest man in his kingdom, was so extremely thin that Dickory could scarcely see him.

His Majesty, however, proved to be very good-natured. He was immensely astonished at Dickory's size, and punched him and poked him in the arms and legs, and asked him a great many questions. He was especially curious to know about the laws and government of the people to whom Dickory belonged; and when the latter said he knew nothing about such things because he was only a little boy, the king's long thin face grew longer still with astonishment.

The end of it all was that the king adopted Dickory as his own guest, and invited him home to the palace. Accordingly, they set out, and after a long walk came to the royal abode, which looked at a distance exactly like a little clump of bean-poles; but Dickory found, on arriving, that it was amply large to accommodate the whole court.

As there was not a house in the kingdom big enough for Dickory to get into, he was obliged to stay out-of-doors. Here, accordingly, his meals were served. Here, too, as the climate was mild, he slept, attended always, however, by a body-guard of soldiers who watched him night and day, lest he should intend any harm.

The first night the king ordered a bed to be taken out in the courtyard for Dickory to sleep on; but it was so very narrow that it proved very much like trying to sleep on a wire, and so after

balancing himself upon it and tumbling off again and again, to the great amusement of the king, Dickory gave it up, and after that slept very comfortably upon the ground.

The next day Dickory was introduced to the king's children, the royal princes and princesses. They were about his own age and were not long in getting acquainted.

As soon as they felt at ease with each other, the young Thin Men asked if he knew any games. Dickory suggested ball and marbles and peg-top. They shook their heads and looked curious. Dickory tried to explain, but he found it impossible to make them understand what a ball or a marble was; they had no conception of anything round.

"Why, just like an orange, you know, or an apple, or a cornball."

The Thin Men shook their heads again. Dickory was in despair. He gave up trying to explain to them any further, and begged them to play some games of their own.

Accordingly, they did. The first game they introduced was something like "tag." As Dickory was sure he could beat the little Thin Men at *any* game, his astonishment was great, when he began to run, to find not only that he could not catch them, but that he could not even keep within sight of them. With their long thin legs they ran like deer, — oh, a great deal faster than deer, faster indeed than a steam-locomotive! — leaving poor

Dickory puffing and panting along behind; while the crowd of spectators, including the royal family and the whole court, chirped and applauded.

But the drollest thing they tried was "hide-and-seek." The Thin Men crawled into such little out-of-the-way cracks and chinks and crannies that they could not be found, while as for poor Dickory, alas! there was nothing in the whole kingdom big enough to conceal him. He got behind the tallest trees and the largest buildings; but even there, he stuck out so on each side that he could be seen plainly for miles.

The king and people jeered so lustily at this that Dickory lost his temper. He determined to show them there were things he *could* do, and without stopping to think of the consequences, rushed up to one of the royal buildings, pushed with all his might, and before anybody could interfere, sent it tumbling in ruins to the ground.

Immediately there was the greatest consternation. Wild squeaks of rage arose from the crowd. The royal guard were ordered to advance. The mob, mad with excitement, squealed, "Down with the wretch! Death to the ruffian!" and pressed forward to the attack.

Dickory was terribly frightened; he had not meant to do any harm. He did not wish to anger his new friends, but there was no chance for explanations; and seeing that it was necessary to defend himself, he seized a long piece of timber

from the ruined building, and swung it around him with such vigor that the guard dared not approach.

Perceiving his advantage, Dickory in turn advanced upon them and drove them ignominiously from the field. Not wishing to pursue his victory further, however, and fearing to make an enemy of the king, Dickory threw down his weapon, made signs of peace, and begged for an interview with the sovereign.

After some reluctance his request was granted, when Dickory, making a humble apology for the harm he had done, said he was very sorry, but that being enraged by the scoffs and jeers of the crowd, he had not stopped to think.

The monarch good-naturedly accepted the apology, and promised that he should be plagued no more. He thereupon issued an edict that no subject, on pain of death, should henceforth presume to irritate the strange giant.

Furthermore, to show his good-will, the king now took Dickory with him upon all occasions. One day, as they were returning from a pleasure excursion, suddenly a storm came on. To Dickory's astonishment, instead of putting up umbrellas to keep off the rain, the Thin Men began skipping and hopping about in the most extraordinary manner. When he asked what this queer behavior meant, he was told they were *running between the drops*. And sure enough, they all



arrived home as dry as a bone, while he was dripping wet.

Then Dickory acknowledged there was some disadvantage in being big. But was he big any longer? Happening to look at himself one day attentively, he was startled to note a perceptible falling-off in his chubby arms and legs. He remembered now that he had felt a queer sensation ever since he arrived in Thin Man's Land of being squeezed. He consulted some of the king's wise men, and learned to his consternation that there was a contracting power in the atmosphere, and that it would go on squeezing and pinching him until, in course of time, he would become as thin and "elegant in figure" as the native inhabitants.

But Dickory was by no means elated at this news. He had no wish to become like one of the native inhabitants; on the contrary, he resolved to leave the country without loss of time. One day, as he was pondering how to accomplish it, he raised his eyes and saw one of the wise men coming towards him. The pundit, after a profound salaam, acquainted Dickory that he had come with a message from the king.

Dickory made a low bow. The pundit made another salaam, bumping his head upon the ground, and then went on to speak as follows:

"His gracious Majesty is most grieved to announce that the Illustrious Stranger's visit to

Thin Land, although very agreeable to himself, is the cause of much complaint among his people."

"What have I done?" stammered Dickory.

"Withered be my tongue that I should say it," continued the pundit, scraping his very forehead in the dust, "but these querulous people say your presence here is rapidly producing a famine."

"A fam — I? — why?"

"Because, say these churls again, of the vast quantities of food which you eat."

Poor Dickory, who had felt half-starved ever since he came, from having so little to eat, made no reply to this, but let the pundit go on. The latter then recited a long apology from the king, to the effect that he was sorry to be compelled to play so ungracious a part, but that the murmuring of the populace left him no other course, and he was obliged to ask his guest to depart.

"Why, that's just what I want to do!" cried Dickory. "Show me the way, and I'll go at once!"

"Ah!" returned the pundit, shaking his head, doubtfully, "that we cannot do; we have no knowledge of your country nor its whereabouts."

"Where *can* I go, then?" asked Dickory.

"The king has already determined; he has appointed an escort, and provided for all your wants on the journey. It only remains for you to say when you will start."

“Start!” repeated Dickory, joyously. “I’ll start right away; but where to?”

“*To Card-Board Land!*” returned the pundit, quickly, and immediately withdrew before the astonished Dickory could ask him another question.

## PART II.

### TWO-DIMENSION SPACE.

“YONDER lies your way; we can go no farther. It is death for a Thin-Man to cross that fatal boundary.”

The officer of the royal guard halted and pointed to a steep and rugged path which led up a hillside.

“But — but — where shall I go then?” stammered Dickory.

“Follow that path; you cannot miss it!” squeaked the officer; “’t will be safe enough for you!”

“Will it lead me home?” faltered Dickory, loath to take leave of his escort, who seemed like old friends now.

“We do not know,” returned the officer. “Our wise men think your home must lie in that direction. That is the land of *two* dimensions; yours is the land of *three*, and should lie next adjoining.”

Dickory said no more, but bade the guard adieu, and stood silently watching them as they marched off down the valley. He then threw himself on the ground, and for a time felt very lonesome and

homesick. At last, however, plucking up courage, he set forth upon his way. After a toilful climb of half an hour, he reached the top of the hill. Here a thick wall of fog uprose before him. He could not see what lay beyond. He paused aghast. Presently, however, remembering the officer's direction, to follow the path, he boldly entered the fog, and groped his way onward.

Scarcely had he gone two score paces, however, when he stepped plump off the edge of a precipice.

Whizz! Like a flash he was whirled heels over head, and began to fall.

Down, down, down, he went for a very long time! Down, down, down, expecting every minute to strike on his head, and be dashed to pieces. Down, still down, he fell; but instead of going faster and faster every minute, strange to say he went slower and slower. Stranger still, he presently felt firm ground under — it seemed to him it was *over* — his feet; and looking up, or as it seemed to him *down*, saw a bright sky over his head.

Such a turning topsy-turvy of the whole world made him dizzy. He walked along reeling. Another strange thing was the difference in the atmosphere; the pinching pressure he had felt in Thin-Man's-Land was suddenly removed from before and behind, but increased on the sides, until he felt that he was being squeezed between two boards. Pretty soon, however, he became used to

all these queer feelings. He rose to reconnoitre. A beautiful landscape lay spread out before him, — on the right, fair green meadows, where cattle were grazing; on the left, high mountains; in the foreground, a highway upon which a very stout man was leisurely walking.

Delighted to see a living creature Dickory darted towards the man to inquire the way home. The stout man, who wore no hat and but a single garment, — a tight-fitting tunic which came to his knees, — turned his eyes, saw Dickory, and uttering a cry, immediately disappeared.

Dickory stared in amazement. He looked about on every side to see what had become of him, when by chance casting his eyes towards the meadow, he saw to his astonishment that many of the cows had also disappeared. While he stood wondering at this, the stout man suddenly came in view again, and again vanished like a flash. In his stead a tall, slender figure ran like a ray of light along the highway.

Dickory straightway gave chase. Away ran the figure, and away ran Dickory. The hills and trees upon the roadside as they came up to them vanished into air. Presently, at a turn in the road, a town came into view, — a beautiful town with fine trees and stately buildings. A broad street ran through the middle.

Down this street ran the figure, and down ran Dickory, at its heels.

A crowd collected. Dickory stopped. The figure stopped too, and turned around. To his amazement, Dickory again beheld the stout man.

In a minute now it was all explained. The mystery was cleared up. The stout man was a creature of two dimensions: he had length and thickness, but no breadth. Looking at him, therefore, in the face, he was as thin as a crack; looking at his profile, he was as fat as an alderman.

It was just so with the cows and the hills, the trees and the houses. Looked at sidewise, they were large and imposing; looked at edgewise, they were hardly visible. Now, too, Dickory understood why the cows and the stout man seemed to have vanished: they had simply turned around. The whole land and everything in it seemed made out of card-board. Hold up a card and look at it sidewise, then edgewise, and you will see what is meant.

The people who now surrounded Dickory were the strangest he had ever seen. On the outskirts of the crowd, where he could see them in profile, they looked like the stout man. Approaching the centre, they grew smaller and smaller, until directly opposite him they seemed to be simply dark lines.

Presently the throng separated, and an important-looking person stepped forward. Dickory afterwards learned that it was the Prime Minister.

“Who are you?” he asked, staring at Dickory.

“Please, I am Dickory Dock.”

“Where did you come from?”

“I tumbled down out of Thin-Man’s-Land.”

“You’re not a Thin-Man; how came you there?”

“I went in a soap-bubble.”

“What’s that?”

“It’s a—a big round thing, with nothing in it.”

The Prime Minister looked blank.

“Like my head,” explained Dickory, anxiously.

There was an explosion of queer little sounds, like chirps and giggles; and several persons in the crowd fell prostrate to the ground.

Instantly all was excitement. The Prime Minister commanded the people to disperse, and calling his train about him, drew Dickory away from the spot.

“Don’t you ever dare to do that again!” he said, sternly.

“I? — that? — what?” stammered Dickory.

“Don’t you ever dare to make another joke in this country!”

“Joke — why, I did n’t make any joke.”

“Silence!” exclaimed the Prime Minister, more sternly than before. “Don’t dare to deny it! You made a miserable joke, sir, and see the result, — five men lie dead on the ground!”

Seeing that Dickory was quite lost in amaze-



ment, the Prime Minister at length explained that it was fatal for his countrymen to laugh.

“A laugh,” he said, “broadens the mouth and face, and oftentimes the whole body. Breadth is a violation of the laws of our being. Alas!” he concluded, with a sigh, “we are an unhappy race, doomed to an eternal gravity, and yet cursed with the keenest sense of humor.”

Dickory was greatly shocked. At home he never willingly killed a fly, and to be the cause of such a tragedy as this made him tremble. The Prime Minister, however, consoled him by saying that he could not be blamed for what he had not intended, adding that laughter was a very common cause of death in their country, and carried off more people every year than any form of disease. “But,” he concluded, “let this be a warning: never attempt to be funny again.”

The Prime Minister now set forward, taking Dickory in his train. He informed his young guest that a great queen ruled over the nation, to whom he would shortly present him.

Arrived at court, Dickory was quite overpowered at the extent of the palace. He thought it the grandest structure he had ever seen; but he very soon found out that it was only card-board, like the rest.

The Queen received him very kindly, and being told that Dickory could not see her very well edge-wise, she graciously presented her profile.

Her Majesty, in turn, was full of astonishment at Dickory's appearance, and very curious to hear his history. So, indeed, was everybody else; all the great men of the court assembled to see and talk with him. His age was what most astonished them. They could not believe that a person of his size was young, and would ever grow any larger, until one of the wise men suggested examining his teeth. This at once decided the question.

Thereupon the Queen, who had lately lost a son about Dickory's age, wanted to adopt him for her heir in place of the dead prince; but Dickory complained of the pressure on his sides, and said he should very soon be pinched to death if he remained. He therefore begged she would consult her wise men as to how he should get home.

The Queen accordingly called together all the sages in the land, and laid the question before them.

While they were pondering it, she commanded that the best of care should be taken of Dickory, and everything possible done for his entertainment.

Expeditions were made daily to different parts of the kingdom, to visit objects of interest. It was while returning from one of these pleasure excursions, attended by a numerous company of the most distinguished ladies and gentlemen of the court, that a strange and terrible experience befell them.

They were crossing a wide plain where not a house nor a tree nor any sort of shelter was at hand. Everybody was in holiday mood, talking and laughing gayly, when suddenly the sky darkened, and a breeze blew up from the north-west.

“The wind! the wind!” shrieked the vanguard, rushing back upon the main party.

“The wind! the wind!” The cry ran like wild-fire through the company, and every cheek blanched with fear.

“What’s the matter?” asked Dickory.

“Lost!— we are all lost!” cried the panic-stricken crowd.

Dickory looked around in amazement upon his terrified companions, some of whom threw themselves on the ground in despair; some started to run home, while others seized hold of him, and clung with the desperate clutch of drowning men.

The cause of their fright soon appeared. The wind, sweeping down upon them in heavy gusts, caught up the hapless Card-Men, and tossed them about like straws. Some it dashed to pieces on the ground; some it whirled aloft in the air; and some it swept away, never to be seen nor heard of again.

Great was the lamentation at court over the loss of so many precious lives. The Prime Minister informed Dickory that the wind was their greatest enemy; that it swept away thousands of people every season; that it uprooted their trees, blew

down their buildings, and was the terror and scourge of their lives. On this account, great care was taken to build their houses in secluded places; and pointing as he spoke to the Queen's palace, he said that that was the only perfectly secure building in the country, because it was built at the foot of a lofty mountain.

The next day Dickory attended the funeral of those who had been killed. Arrived at the place of burial he was astonished to find no trace of any graves, but all the people gathered about a spot in the ground which shone like burnished gold.

Consulting the Prime Minister, Dickory learned that there were no graves in the country, and that the bright spot in the ground was called "The Gate of the Future," and that it was made of pure gold. Through this gate," said the Prime Minister, "our departed friends are ushered directly into the next world."

When the "Gate of the Future" was opened, Dickory was astonished to see the light shining through. Going nearer he saw to his horror that the ground was card-board too, and that a hole had been simply cut through it, and covered with the golden gate.

Then a bright idea occurred to Dickory: the next world must be his own, where he had come from, and where his home was; and now he understood in a minute where all the card-board toys, the troops of soldiers, sailors, and statesmen, fine

ladies, and peasant maids, which make up our collection of paper dolls come from; *they are dropped through from Card-Board Land!*

Not long after this there came news one day that a terrible tiger had sprung forth from the jungle, and devoured several people travelling on the highway. The Queen gave orders that a hunting-party should be made up to go and destroy the tiger. The boldest and most experienced huntsmen were chosen for the task. Dickory, who had never seen a tiger-hunt, begged leave to go; and the Prime Minister, after warning him of the danger, and cautioning him to keep at a safe distance, finally gave his consent. Dickory was provided with a sharp sword and a stout bow and arrow; and early one morning he set forth with the huntsmen, attended by horses and dogs and an immense concourse of people.

Arrived at the jungle which skirted one side of the great highway, gongs were beaten, and the dogs were let loose to start the savage beast from his lair.

After some time, as nothing was heard, the huntsmen grew bolder, and some of them ventured to enter the jungle.

Suddenly the most frantic squeaks and shrieks were heard, and the next moment the audacious huntsmen came flying from the jungle, pursued by the tiger, with bloody jaws agape to devour them. The ferocious animal sprang among the



"THE TIGER STRUGGLED VIOLENTLY TO GET CLEAR."

crowd, throwing down horses and riders, and tearing to pieces everybody in his path.

The crowd fled, shrieking, in all directions. The boldest huntsmen took to their heels. Dickory found himself left entirely alone, exposed to the attack of the bloodthirsty monster. The tiger paused a moment to take breath, and then came dashing at him.

But Dickory, as soon as he saw that it was only a card-board tiger, felt no fear, and instead of running stood his ground. He threw away his bow and arrow, however, and picked up a stout stick from the ground.

When the tiger came near, and saw how big and round Dickory was, — so different from the card-board men, — he stopped and stared, lashing his tail. The crowd, meanwhile, which had paused at a safe distance to witness the encounter, now cried out to Dickory to run or he was a dead man.

But just at that moment Dickory made a strange discovery. The tiger having turned sidewise for a moment, Dickory detected several large holes in his body, where the arrows and darts of the huntsmen had gone clear through. Inspired with a bold purpose, Dickory now marched straight up to the astonished beast, and thrust his long staff through one of these holes. The tiger struggled violently to get clear; but taking both hands, Dickory uplifted the once formidable monster high in the air, and whirled him around and around on

the staff, as you would twirl a card on a lead pencil.

Tremendous squeaks and chirps and squeals of joy burst from the people, when they beheld this amazing feat of Dickory. With gongs beating and banners flying, the multitude accompanied him back to the palace. There in presence of the Queen and the whole court Dickory shut the tiger into a large cage where he was afterwards kept as the greatest prize in the royal menagerie.

The fame of Dickory now spread abroad through the land, and people flocked from all parts of the kingdom to see him. Renewed efforts were made by the Queen and the Prime Minister to induce him to stay with them; but he rejected all their entreaties, as he felt more and more anxious every day to get home to his mother and father and Hickory.

The good-hearted Queen, when she saw that her young guest was really homesick for his mother, felt the greatest sympathy for him, and commanded the poor perplexed wise men on pain of death to find some means to secure his speedy return.

In the mean time, something took place which in a minute destroyed all Dickory's popularity. It was a terrible accident, and Dickory was the cause of it; but he was not to blame, as you will see. Nevertheless, it resulted in a serious damage, not only to the Queen, but to the entire nation.

It had often been suggested to Dickory to climb



the high mountain back of the Queen's palace, as from that point — the highest in the realm — a bird's-eye view could be obtained of the whole country. Very few of the natives had ever attempted the feat, as it was considered very dangerous, — the only man who had ever reached the summit having paid the forfeit of his rashness with his life. So many lives, indeed, had been lost in the attempt that at length it had been forbidden by law to climb the mountain. The peril to the natives lay in the fact that on the top of the mountain a strong wind was always found blowing, which catching the bold adventurer, whirled him aloft in the clouds or dashed him in pieces in the abyss.

As Dickory was not subject to this danger, it was thought that *he* might reach the top in safety. After much persuasion, he determined to make the trial. The day was fixed. News of the undertaking having gone abroad, a dense throng of people assembled to witness the experiment.

To Dickory there seemed only one difficulty in the way: he must needs ascend the mountain edgewise, and he had grave doubts about being able to keep his balance.

However, at the appointed time he came forth, attended by the Queen and the whole court, and taking in his hands a long balancing-pole, as he had seen the rope-walkers do at the circus, he started up the dangerous ascent.

Advancing slowly, and choosing his steps with care, all for a time went well. But as he approached the summit the path grew steeper and somewhat slippery. Several times he nearly lost his balance, but thanks to his pole, saved himself from falling.

Up, up he went, higher and higher, until the top was almost gained. The crowd below shouted and cheered. Only a few steps more and he would be there. But stop, what was that? Again it came. To his horror, the mountain itself began to sway. What should he do? He could not go back. He could not go forward. He could not stand still. A violent trembling seized him. He grew dizzy. He lost his balance, and began to totter. Seeing that he was about to fall, he threw away his pole, made a wild jump, reached the summit, and fell heavily forward, clasping the topmost peak in his arms.

The whole mountain trembled, swayed a moment, and then, with a tremendous crash that rang through the length and breadth of the land, fell flat to the ground, carrying Dickory with it; luckily for him, he was upon the upper side!

The whole kingdom felt the shock. A wail arose from the terrified multitude. Men shouted, children cried, and women fainted; a wild tumult prevailed.

Dickory arose, stunned and bruised; he staggered towards the palace. The populace received

him with threats and curses. The Prime Minister promptly sent the royal guard to protect and escort him home. The same official then made a speech to the people, explaining that what had happened, although a dire calamity, was not Dickory's fault, for he had undertaken the ascent against his will.

But the people would not be satisfied. The highest mountain in the kingdom, the pride and glory of the nation, had been levelled with the ground; the beautiful palace of the Queen was now left exposed to the fury of the wind, and the next hurricane might sweep it from the earth.

Countless voices cried for vengeance; they demanded the instant expulsion of the dangerous stranger. The Prime Minister could only appease them by promising that their wishes should be complied with.

He then came hurrying to Dickory, and told him that not an hour was to be lost. In a short time the whole nation would be up in arms, and he could not answer for the consequences.

Fortunately, that very day the wise men came with a plan for conveying Dickory home. After much deliberation they had decided that the only possible way was to tie a stout rope around his body and let him down through the "Gate of the Future," until he arrived at the next world, which they concluded must be his home.

The Queen shook her head, and the Prime Min-

ister at first looked doubtful; but Dickory eagerly cried that he was willing and ready to make the experiment, and so at last it was decided upon.

The whole night was passed in preparations. When day broke everything was done. The whole court assembled to witness his departure, which was kept a secret from the people. The Queen and her ladies wept. The Prime Minister embraced him tenderly, and all escorted him to the "Gate of the Future."

Here everything was in readiness, — endless piles of rope, and relays of stout men to work it. Great care had been taken to secure absolute safety. It was, moreover, agreed that if no land was reached before the rope was all played out that Dickory was to be pulled up again.

A little swinging seat had been arranged at the end of the rope, with loops for his arms. Into this, having bid adieu to his friends, Dickory now fastened himself, waved his hand gayly, as a signal to the men, and was forthwith lowered through the hole.

Down — down — down — down — down — down he went, twisting and gyrating through the air, until, as he looked up, the Card-board world appeared like a little speck in the sky.

Down — down — down. Still down, and ever down he sank, until he grew giddy with the circling motion; until he grew drowsy, and gradually nodded off into sleep and unconsciousness.

Suddenly he seemed to bump against something. He felt a sharp tap on his shoulder. He started and opened his eyes, and lo and behold! there was Hickory shaking him by the arm.

“Why don’t you come, Lazy Boots? I called you a long time ago. I got almost down there, and had to come way back.”

“Eh — what? — where am I?” cried Dickory, starting up and looking around in astonishment.

“Where are you, Goosey? — Ha! — ha! — ha! how funny you look! Why, asleep on the lounge in your own room; and here’s your book fallen down on the floor!” cried Hickory, laughing as he stooped to pick up a copy of Jules Verne’s “Voyage to the Moon.”

“What do you say? — where is the Prime Minister? Where is — did I dream all that?” cried Dickory, rubbing his eyes, in amazement.

“Yes, and you’re dreaming still. Wake up; hurry, I tell you! I’m waiting to go.”

“Go? — where?”

“To the brook, of course; mother says we may. Come on! I’ve got the towels!”

“Yes, yes; I’ll come,” cried Dickory, picking up his hat, “but Hickory — ”

“What?”

“*I guess we’d better not take any soap.*”