The Gift of Quirn

BY JOHN T. TROTH.

PART II.

"Well! Well! Start to prophesy!" growled Zoto ungraciously, and Shom, gulping once or twice at the thunderous echoes of his unfamiliar voice in the dead silence, began. It was hard work, for the atmosphere was shattered at unexpected moments by piercing shrieks from the unhappy bird toward whom the Princess had again directed her earnest endeavors. At these times Shom was obliged to shout so that the King could hear, but as he never knew just when the peacock would leave off screaming, he often heard himself shouting into the sudden silence, whereat the King would scowl and Shom would blush mightily. However, it was no use to fail after having come so far, so he went bravely ahead, and this is the substance of his speech:

"O King," he began, "I come not with prophecy alone, for prophecy is often a muchness in the mouth but a nothingness in the stomach! I come with prophecy and fulfillment in the same hand. I bear that of which a god, even Quirn, has said 'Many a king would gladly give much to possess it.' It is small in size but more potent than the contents of all your treasure chests, and in return for it I ask only to have a certain title bestowed upon me."

Now all this time the King had been looking intently at Shom's closed hand, for he was even a thought more curious than the usual run of kings, and, besides, a title is the very simplest thing in all the world for a king to give. So he commanded that the point be come to at once, but Shom slyly intimated that the matter was one fit for royal ears alone, and ventured to suggest that the court be dismissed that he might reveal the secret in greater privacy. The King by this time was fairly fidgeting with impatience, and at his word the whole court scurried out of earshot, the Princess trailing disdainfully after the rest. Shom immediately revealed the purse and explained its peculiar properties. The King was no slower than Shom had been to perceive the convenience of the arrangement, and wished to try its powers at once.

"Very well," said Shom. "We will assume that Your Highness is one of the merchants of your capital and that I am you, I thereupon offer you this gold piece for your crown."

"But," hesitated the King, "it's my very best crown." Being reassured that it was all in make believe, he handed the crown to Shom with admonition not to drop it, and took the gold piece. Shom pretended to walk off with his purchase, calling back gleefully over his shoulder, "Now look for the coin!"

The King opened his hand and saw with amazement that it was quite empty. He ran after Shom, seized the purse, and there was the gold piece looking up at him as innocently as your dog, when he has been raising hob over the countryside all day, and at suppertime walks nonchalantly in at the door, wagging his tail and saying, with a surprised air, "Were you looking for me?"

That was enough for Zoto. Kinging had become a more complicated business than it used to be, and he immediately imagined himself taking a vacation from the court, wandering about the bazaars in disguise and buying any trinket that might catch his fancy, without having to explain his extravagance to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. So he told Shom, quite affably, to name the title he wished to bear.

"In return for this magical purse," said Shom, while his heart beat much louder than the peacock had screamed, "I respectfully ask that you confer upon me the title of Son-in-law."

"Which is, indeed, a most brazen request!" was the reply, in tones of offended dignity.

"Doubtless," said Shom, "but think of the fun Your Majesty will have at the expense of the merchants!"

This incontestable argument carried the day, and the King straightaway set about devising a feasible scheme. Intrigue of any kind being, as every one knows, second nature (if not indeed first) to a king, while but seventh or eighth to a goatherd, his mental exercise demanded neither the wrinkled forehead nor the tongue-in-cheek expression, but resulted almost immediately in a right noble and kingly gesture, consisting in a pantomine which might have constituted Zoto's coat of arms, to wit, forefinger dexter couchant beside nasal appendage gules, rampant, with eye sinister tombant! This ingenuous manoeuvre seeming to mystify Shom, the King, now in high feather, proceeded to amplify. He would advise the court that he was going on a journey of one week alone. Shom was to assume the royal robes and crown, sitting daily upon the throne that the townsfolk might not suspect the King's absence. Once every day he was to see the Princess. And if, at the end of the week, the magic purse had not failed a single time, the King would return and the marriage surely be solemnized. This appearing fair enough to Shom, the Princess and the higher nobles were made acquainted with the externals of the plan, and the King set about getting ready. He got himself up as a strolling player, with the purse made fast by a cord beneath his doublet, and vanished hurriedly through a side door of the palace, singing merrily in a high, cracked voice. He had first turned over his various regalia to Shom, earnestly reminding him that he had no time to go through his pockets, and that, consequently, "Finding's keepin's" did not apply to anything that might drop out of the royal robes. Shom had replied that that was eminently proper under the circumstances, which evidently relieved the King, who was trying to conceal under his clothing a large, strong sack, designed to hold his loot of the unsuspecting merchants and sweetmeat sellers, for he was inordinately fond of sweets.

So the King took himself off, as we have seen, in great glee, and the goatherd knew the glory of costly robes and an imposing throne. Those of the court accorded him considerable deference, partly because they saw in him the accredited representative of Quirn, but more because he was a jovial party to serve and much easier to amuse than the cantankerous King. They all welcomed the prospect of a whole week without broken heads and tried their best to please him. Shom, for his part, related marvelous tales of his intimacy with the lesser gods, whom he claimed willing to do almost anything to please him, and when he had run out of plausible inventions it was great sport to order forth the palace musicians and sit listening to sweet music as he speculated on the manner of his life when he had finally won the Princess, for he had perfect faith that the purse would fail neither the King nor himself.

The Princess, true to her part in the proceedings, appeared in the throne room every day. Passing along a corridor which ran to the right of the dais, on her way to the palace gardens, she would part the heavy draperies and look smilingly at Shom, calling, in the very silveriest of tones and with a merry twinkle in her taunting eyes, "Good morning, Poppa!" The first morning she added, holding up seven slim fingers and making a most provocative mouth at him, "Only seven days!" which delighted Shom immensely! And then it was "Only six days," "Only five days," "Only four days," until the seventh day of the appointed week she called gaily "Tomorrow!" which so moved Shom that he kept the musicians playing hard all day long, until they fell over from fatigue.

But in the evening of this last day of the King's absence, while walking beneath the vine-covered balcony of the Princess' apartments, Shom heard her in earnest conversation with her old nurse, and what she said filled him with uncommon bitterness, for she was giving the woman amazing directions to be carried out on the following day. It appeared that, before leaving, the wily King had agreed to a most politic and satisfactory marriage between Zeni and one of the Princes of Gaw. Upon the very afternoon of the King's return Zeni and her entourage were to set off for Gaw, and she would be married that evening. The Princess was far from averse to becoming Queen in the happy city of Gaw, and one can understand her apparent impatience and her delight in announcing to the unsuspecting Shom the approach of the great day. But the part of the story which made Shom determine upon a suitable vengeance was when he further learned that the King had a second daughter; an ugly half-wit, whom he proposed to dress in Zeni's raiment, disguised by a wedding veil, and marry to Shom, while knowing very well that Shom expected to marry Zeni herself. Thus, remarked the Princess, while the old nurse nodded her approbation of the King's scrupulousness in trifles, the letter of the promise would be respected, and Shom perceived that kings were much cleverer than goatherds, after all, and that it would again be necessary for him to do some serious thinking.

Shom's thoughts finally resolved themselves into the following rather peculiar actions. He went quietly to the royal apiary, which supplied the honey that the King delighted to spread on his white bread, carefully closed and lifted a hive into which the bees had retired for the night and carried it to a small glass-inclosed summer house in a distant corner of the grounds. He left it there, fastening the door securely behind him. Very early the next morning he dressed, in the King's robes as usual, and went secretly to the summer house, providing himself on the way with a long, straight branch. Opening the door a crack, he inserted the branch and poked at the hive until he had stirred up the bees to an ominous dim roar of anger. When the were about to discover the position of their enemy he quickly closed the door, and they beat against the glass in frenzied clouds. Shom showed himself to them at all the windows in turn, and the army of outraged bees followed him around, seeming to become more furious at each appearance of the scarlet robe and glittering crown. At last, when he thought their mood a fair reproduction of his own feelings, he left them, returning to the throne room to await the arrival of the King.

About noon there came a knocking at the side door of the palace, and at Shom's direction the knocker was admitted. It was the King, quite jovially drunk and staggering under the weight of a bulging sack. The court was dismissed, and as soon as they were alone the King proceeded to exhibit his treasures, which consisted of every unimaginable kind of utterly useless trinket, mixed with divers pastries and sweets, which were somewhat the worse for being carried for a week in the sun. Shom complimented him on the excellence of his taste, inquiring if the magical purse had once failed him.

"Never failed me once!" giggled the King, plunging into innumerable reminiscences of his adventures, which Shom interrupted to ask:

"Then you are willing to keep your word and make me your son-in-law?"

"You shall be my son-in-law this very day!" the King swore, rubbing his hands slyly as he remembered the amazing pleasantry he had planned.

Shom then suggested that it was not fitting the King should be seen in his rather dilapidated outfit and persuaded him to resume his proper robes and crown, which the King did, clambering up on to the throne and dragging the precious sack after him. In his excitement, however, he overlooked transferring the purse, which Shom recovered from the strolling player's garments and hid beneath his own red tunic.

The court having been assembled, the ugly Princess dressed to resemble Zeni (while the latter prepared to set out secretly for Gaw) and all being at last ready for the wedding ceremony, Shom confided to the King that he had the previous evening stolen a most magnificent golden chain from the shop of a silversmith and hidden it in the summer house. He proposed that they go together to get it, that it might be presented to the bride at the proper time. This tickled the King immensely, the more so because the silversmith in question had been overlooked in the other diversions of the week, so they set off across the palace grounds after first tucking the sack under the throne.

When they reached the place of concealment, Shom, with his hand on the door said:

"After you, father-in-law! See if you can discover where I have hidden the golden chain."

He opened the door to admit the King, who bustled expectantly in and began looking for the chain, not noticing the hive. Then Shom closed the door softly and locked it on the outside, departing swiftly for his own beloved slopes of Dumeen, for he had a dislike of distressing spectacles.

He left the King to find the chain, with the help of the bees, who are said to possess an astounding memory and do not easily forget the person of one who has done them an injury. And the two Princesses waited impatiently in the palace.

(The End.)

Minard's Liniment for Burns & Scalds

NURSES

The Toronto Hospital for Incurables, in affiliation with Bellevue and Allied Hospitals, New York City, offers a three years' Course of Training to young women, having the required education, and desirous of becoming nurses. This Hospital has adopted the eight-hour system. The pupils receive uniforms of the School, a monthly allowance and travelling expenses to and from New York. For further information apply to the Superintendent.

Woman's Sphere

Ma's Tools.

At home it seems to be the rule
Pa never has the proper tool,
Or knack to fix things, for the stunt
That stumps ma, though, you'll have to hunt.

The caster on the table leg
Fell out. Pa said a wooden peg
Would fix it up, but ma kept mum
An' fixed it with a wad of gum.

The bureau drawer got stuck one day,
An' push or pull, 'twas there to stay.
Says pa, "Some day 'twill shrink, I hope."
Ma fixed it with a piece of soap.

I broke the stove door hinge one day,
'Twas cracked before, though, any way,
Pa said we'd put a new door in;
Ma grabbed her hair an' got a pin.

The bath tub drain got all clogged up
Pa bailed the tub out with a cup—
He had a dreadful helpless look,
Ma cleaned it with a crochet hook.

The garden gate latch broke one day,
Cows ate our sweet corn up, an' say,
Pa scolded like a house afire,
Ma fixed the latch up with hay wire.

So when my things get out of fix
Do I ask pa to mend 'em? Nix!
But ma just grabs what's near at hand
An' togs things up to beat the band.

Harmony in Flowerland.

It is never too early to plan the summer beauty crops; sometimes I think them out while the seed pods of autumn are still swaying in the breeze. Planning a flower bed is like trying on new spring hats, each seems lovlier than the last and each must be considered with relation to its surroundings. To illustrate: a flower bed, lovely in itself, may conflict with a neighboring bed, waging such positive warfare as to mar the harmony of the whole delightful summer.

I am not strong for centre beds that cut into the restful sweep of a lawn; a rioting border along the boundaries or masses of one particular flower trying to outdo its neighbor in fragrant display, are to my mind, more pleasing. Everybody can be treated impartially in a jumble-bed, the only preference being in giving the shorter plants front seats. Anything and everything, the more the merrier, from stately aristocratic cannas at the back to dainty snow white candytuft in front, with all the colors of the rainbow tangled between. Be sure to include a generous sprinkling of blue blossoms to get the best rioting effect; blue ageratum is splendid. Even a blue morning glory vine, plebian though it is supposed to be, may be permitted to trail its lovely bells across the cannas and down again over the front bushes.

Years ago I started a hollyhock hedge along our back fence and I have had full reward every fall in a dainty wave of color across my kitchen view. For some reason the hapless hollyhock is generally required to fight it out alone with the weeds, but I cultivate mine as carefully as John does his corn and had just as good a crop, even if we couldn't eat it! If you keep bees, plant the single varieties and prove to your John that hollyhocks can be made an eating crop as well as corn.

Once I went in for bush nasturtiums, surrounding the premises with ribbon beds that furnished countless bouquets of spicy gorgeousness and a most charming effect. I dug the beds very deep and just a foot wide, then set the plants about a foot apart; well, you would have to see it to realize what an unusually beautiful effect it made. I learned two tricks with nasturtiums that year: one, they should be picked as religiously as pansies or sweet peas; the other, a rather poor soil brings out brighter blossoms and less foliage.

If you have a shrub or rose hedge, be careful that the prowling grass roots do not edge in on the rose roots; instead of a scraggly grass margin, keep it clean cut and have some quick blooming summer flower to take up the pretty work after the last rose has faded. The delicate little portulaca is simply unsurpassed for filling in under roses, or any other shrubbery; or, tame daisies, pansies, California poppies, any of the low growing beauties can be used.

If you love asters, try a new arrangement this coming fall. Get the seed in separate colors and plant them in stripes, the red and rose tints first, then white, and on the other side the bluish and lavender shades. "Say" your patriotism "with flowers."

Last year I mixed flaming single poppies with blue larkspur and had a bed of dazzling brightness; this summer I shall plant the poppies solid and edge them with white candytuft for a more restful effect when Old Sol is doing his worst. White or blue flowers carry a suggestion of coolness; startlingly red blossoms (cannas, salvia, poppies, geraniums) send the thermometer scooting. On a scorching day, a bed of red poppies resembles an army of butterflies arrayed for battle, and I am trusting to the ever-lovely candytuft to wave the white flag of peace.

The Farmer's Sunday Dinner.

Roast of beef, cooked in casserole with apples and bacon, sweet potatoes, stewed tomatoes, pickles, bread and butter, cream nut pie, currant jelly, cheese, and coffee.

This menu is planned with the idea of making the preparation of the Sunday dinner a really easy matter and, at the same time, giving the farmer and his helpers the hearty and appetizing food which outdoor workers require. A boned rib roast of beef is seared in drippings, or its own fat, and partly roasted on Saturday, at a time which is most convenient for the housewife. Tomatoes are cooked and seasoned, to be reheated. A thick, boiled cream for the pie is prepared in a double boiler (also on Saturday), and a pie-shell is baked in a deep, oven-glass pie dish. The dough for the shell may have been left over from a former baking, and kept in a cold place until used.

On Sunday morning the roast is placed in a casserole and dredged with browned flour prepared for this purpose. Peeled sweet potatoes are placed with the roast, and next to the potatoes are placed apples, which are somewhat tart. The apples should be cored, then stuffed with rolls of thinly sliced bacon. The casserole is then placed in a moderate oven where the food will cook slowly while the family attends church. On their return from church, the casserole is placed in the heating oven over the top of the range, leaving the oven for the completion of the pie. The vessel containing the tomatoes is placed over the fire, for reheating.

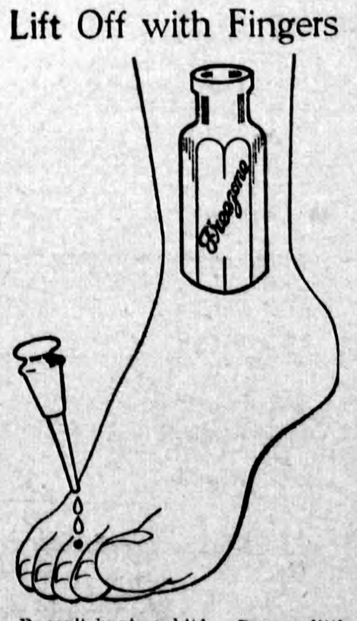
When the preparations are complete, dinner is served in the dish in which it was cooked. Bread and butter, pickles or other relish, accompany this course.

To make the pie, pour the cream into the pie-shell, sprinkle chopped nut meats (preferably hickory-nuts) over the cream, and cover with a meringue made of whites of two eggs and sugar, and place in the oven until a light brown. With the pie serve tart, red currant jelly and cheese cut in cubes. Coffee is also served with this course. The pie is served at the table in the dish in which it is baked, the use of this dish and the casserole making serving dishes unnecessary.

The housewife who wishes some freedom and leisure on Sunday must plan with care and do some of the work on Saturday, otherwise she will not succeed. All work and no play (or rest) is as bad for the housewife as it is for "Jack." In the model home "mother" also has a day of rest.

CORNS

Lift Off with Fingers



Doesn't hurt a bit! Drop a little "Freezone" on an aching corn, instantly that corn stops hurting, then shortly you lift it right off with fingers. Truly!

Your druggist sells a tiny bottle of "Freezone" for a few cents, sufficient to remove every hard corn, soft corn, or corn between the toes, and the calluses, without soreness or irritation.

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If a man frequently says "I don't know," there is at least a reasonable presumption that he is well informed.

Minard's Liniment for Coughs & Colds.

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