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## "TOD" ELKUM'S AUTOMOBILE TRAP.

By Howard P. Garis.

**T**HREE weeks before Thanksgiving there was a consultation among the inmates of the Morrisville poorhouse. It was held in the common sitting-room, where the men and women were allowed to gather when they were not eating or sleeping. About all the informants in the almshouse had to do was to eat and sleep; a few worked about the institution or in the garden. The convention opened rather unexpectedly, when Sarah Tooker remarked:

"What d'ye s'pose we'll have for Thanksgiving?"

All the others turned and looked at her, for Sarah was the latest arrival, and consequently new to the regulations governing the Morrisville poorhouse.

"Do they feed us on turkey or chicken?" she continued. "I'm a little mite fonder of turkey myself, but I s'pose I can eat chicken as a pinch."

"Ho! ho!" laughed Rodney Eckert. "Ho! ho!" and his two remaining teeth rattled together like corn in a parching-pail. "Turkey! Chicken! Land love ye, Sarah Tooker! If it ain't roast beef it'll be lamb stew, and if it ain't lamb stew it'll be roast beef, an' ye can take your choice. I know, I've been here nigh onto fourteen year now. Most likely it'll be lamb stew. I call to mind how we had roast beef last year."

Eight other old men and ten other old women nodded their heads in grave assent. They also knew, from more or less long experience, what the Thanksgiving dinner would be. It was only slightly different from the usual meals of soup, bread and tea, served regularly at the poorhouse. Only Sarah looked for a change. The others thought little about it.

"Lamb stew," said Sarah, plaintively. "Why, the ideal Thanksgiving, too! Well, all I've got to say is, that it ain't what I'm used to, nor by a good deal. I don't see why we can't have a chicken potpie," she finished, with a little sigh.

"Don't let Zeke Jedell hear ye," cautioned Bud Tankert. "As long as he's been superintendent of this poorhouse, he can't abide to have any one find fault with the eatin'. Not that we need to, most times; but since ye brought up the 'Thanksgiving' subject, it kinder runs in my head. Turkey! Ah! Um!"

"My, oh, my! Thanksgiving, an' lamb stew!" repeated Sarah. "It doesn't seem reasonable. Before I had to come here I was used to a big turkey for dinner—a big, fat, brown turkey."

"If ye'd just leave off mentioning such things I'd be obliged to ye," said Tod Elkum, with a little quaver in his voice. He awoke from the doze he had been in. "It makes a body feel hungry," he went on. "Specially when the feastin' time's so near. If it's all the same, ye might mention somethin' about bein' shipwrecked on a desert island, with nothin' to eat but boot-legs an' seaweed. That'll give us appetites for lamb stew," he concluded.

A silence concluded, while each one of the twenty inmates of the poorhouse was busy with his or her own sad thoughts.

Sarah Tooker wagged her head, dejectedly. It was a new experience for her, for she had been in good circumstances until failing fortunes and the death of all her relatives had obliged her to seek refuge in that place dreaded by all the aged.

"It does seem a pity we can't celebrate for once," mused Tod Elkum, as he walked out into the yard. "I would relish a nice, brown slice of turkey, with plenty of gravy an' lots of dressing. And I wouldn't mind some cranberry sauce, too. But I s'pose th' selectmen ain't got money to waste on such frills."

Out on the pleasant country road a great red automobile pushed by, raising a cloud of dust. The State turnpike passed through Morrisville.

"I'll bet those folks ain't worryin' about where their turkey is comin' from," went on Tod. "Well, we can't all be rich, and maybe it's a good thing."

He strolled toward the road, walking slowly, for his limbs were feeble from age. He enjoyed the crisp air of November and the genial sun, which tempered the rather cool afternoon. There was the delightful smell of autumn, coming from the brown earth, and the dried leaves rattled as he trod on them.

He reached the road and turned toward the village. The dust from the automobile was still flying lazily in the sunlight. A little way ahead Tod saw a figure. It was that of a man, and he was shaking his staff at

something in the distance. When Tod came nearer he recognized Hank Wright, the town marshal.

"What's the trouble?" he asked. "Somebody tryin' to run over ye?"

"It's them pesky automobiles!" said Hank.

"What did it do? Most nip ye?" inquired Tod.

"No. But it was goin' twice as fast as the law allows," replied Hank, "and I was hollerin' to stop it. The selectmen have passed a law, limitin' the rate to ten mile an hour, and this one was goin' twenty if it was going one."

"And ye were countin' on arrestin' 'em?"

"I was, and finin' 'em, too," said Hank, firmly. "There's a penalty of ten dollars for exceedin' the speed limit. Half of it goes to the town and the other half is divided between the marshal making the arrest and Squire Bascomb. There's a good two dollars and a half I could have had just as well as not."

"It's somethin' like fishin'," consoled Tod. "Better luck next time."

"I'll warrant the next one don't get away from me!" threatened Hank. He walked on, while Tod strolled slowly after him.

But the sturdy legs of the marshal soon proved too fast for the older man, and Tod dropped behind.

"If I see any of them automobilers goin' too fast, shall I notify ye?" called out Tod after the retreating marshal.

"Yes, or ye can arrest 'em yourself, if ye want to," answered Hank. "No law again' it. But ye'd better be careful. It takes some one with a show of authority to bring 'em to a halt."

"Well, I'll let ye know if I see any of 'em," said Tod, as he kept on with halting pace.

The days came and went. Life continued the same in the Morrisville poorhouse. There was the same soup and tea and bread. The little excitement caused by the mention of a Thanksgiving feast had died out. A week before the holiday Zeke Jedell, the superintendent, called on Thomas Jenkins, the chairman of the board of town selectmen.

"What'll I give the inmates for Thanksgiving?" asked Zeke.

"What did they have last year?" asked Mr. Jenkins.

"Roast beef and potatoes," answered Zeke.

"Beef's high and funds are low," said Mr. Jenkins. "Lamb's cheaper. Give 'em lamb stew."

"They had that year before last," ventured Zeke.

"Well, they'll forget it by this time," rejoined Mr. Jenkins.

"Humph! You don't know 'em as well as I do," said Zeke. But there was no appealing from the decision of the chairman, and the superintendent prepared to give a big dinner of lamb stew to his charges.

Thanksgiving was three days off. Even Sarah Tooker, most hopeful of all, had given up, and resigned herself to lamb stew. The others, after the brief delights of an almost wild anticipation, had fallen back into their usual apathy.

But some new spirit seemed awakened in Tod Elkum. He slept less than usual, and when True Kimball wanted him to engage in the usual game of checkers one afternoon Tod declined.

"What ye goin' to do?" asked True.

"I got a little matter o' business to tend to down the road," answered Tod, and he hurried away as fast as his legs would carry him.

He was muttering to himself.

"If it works, there ain't any reason why we sha'n't ail have turkey," he was saying, softly. "If I've only got gumption enough to do it. And I will! I will! Just to think—a lamb stew for Thanksgiving! I never realized before what it meant. It's all along o' Sarah Tooker's suggestin' it."

Tod walked along the State road, scanning the fence closely. The weather, although crisp, was clear, and there was no sign of snow yet. The autumn was late that year, and coaching and automobile parties from the cities near Morrisville were frequent.

"I guess that'll do," said Tod, as he took hold of a long, heavy rail. From his pocket he pulled some rope, and then he fastened one end of the rail to a fence-post, loosely, so that it worked as if on a hinge. Then he hoisted the rail high in the air, upright, fastening it there by a light pole, used as a brace.

To this brace he tied another piece of rope, and then, holding the end of the cord in his hand, he took his position on the other side of the road, near the fence.

"My spring trap's all complete now," said he, with a chuckle. "I'm ready for the game when it comes along."

Any one who watched him might have wondered what sort of game the old man hoped to catch. He sat for nearly an hour, resting his weary back against the lowest fence-rail. The dried leaves on the forest trees in the woods to his left rustled in the cool fall wind. In his rather thin garments the old man shivered.

Suddenly from down the road sounded a cry, like a flock of wild geese in flight:

Ho! ho! ho!

"There she blows!" cried the old man, jumping up. "Now for my trap! If it only works!"

Around a bend in the road came a big red automobile. It was speeding along, the gay party in it laughing and talking.

"Fifteen mile an hour if it's a foot," muttered Tod. He drew in his breath sharply. His hands trembled, but he steadied them, and then he gave the cord a sudden "yank." The long rail fell with a clatter and bang right across the road. The path was effectually blocked.

The man at the steering-wheel gave a yell. He pulled some levers with a suddenness that brought the big machine up with a quiver of brakes.

"What do you mean?" asked the man at the wheel, angrily. "We might have smashed that rail if I hadn't stopped."

"I calculated ye'd stop," said the old man, coolly. "That's what I put the rail there for."

"Well, you must be crazy," said the man, lifting up his big goggles. "What in the world did you want us to stop for?"

"Exceedin' the speed limit," replied Tod, sententiously. "Goin' faster'n ten mile an hour. I'm delegated by th' town marshal to 'rest ye,' he went on, simply. "Hank Wright; mebby ye know him."

"No, I don't," rejoined the chauffeur, crossly.

"I'm sprised," rejoined Tod. "Well, it don't matter. He's delegated me to look after such people's you, ridin' faster'n the law allows."

"Have you a badge?" asked the chauffeur, suddenly.

Tod hesitated for an instant. He thought of Hank Wright's big shinning nickel star, the emblem of his authority as town marshal, and his face fell.

"I ain't got any badge," he said at last. "There ain't but one badge in town, and Hank Wright wears that. He's the town marshal. But he's give me the authority to arrest ye, and so I'd advise ye to submit peacefully."

"Ye see," he continued, feeling that some explanation was necessary. "I ain't been long at this business. I live over at the poorhouse, an' this is my own idea for raisin' funds for gettin' a Thanksgiving dinner."

"What in the world has stopping our automobile got to do with a Thanksgiving dinner?" asked the man with the goggles.

"Why, there's ten dollars' fine for goin' faster'n the law allows," explained Tod. "Half goes to the town, an' the other half is divided 'tween me an' Squire Bascomb. So ye'd better come 'long peacefully and 'bear in court, for I represent the law, that's what I do," and his wrinkled and seamed old face, kindly as it always was, took on a queer, stern look.

There was a brief whispering among the occupants of the automobile.

"I might add that all we was goin' to have for Thanksgiving dinner," said Tod, "was lamb stew. I've as good as earned two dollars and a half now, and I'm goin' to stay here till I get enough for a good turkey dinner. Be ye ready to go to the justice's office?"

"Yes, we'll go along peacefully," said the man with the goggles. "Won't you get in and ride with us?"

"If ye'll promise not to go faster'n the law allows," agreed the old man.

"We'll go slowly," said the chauffeur.

Thereupon Tod removed the fence-rail, and gingerly climbed into the automobile. There was a little flurry of excitement when the big, puffing machine drew up in the village before the office of Squire Bascomb, although the filing of drivers of the machines was not infrequent in the town.

"I 'rested 'em," said Tod, proudly, to the gaping crowd of villagers. "I 'rested 'em, squire, with my patent automobile-stopper," and he chuckled at the remembrance.

Squire Bascomb opened court gravely.

"Are you sure they were exceedin' the speed limit?" he asked Tod.

"Well—" began the old man, slowly, for he had not counted on having to give evidence, technical evidence at that.

"Oh, yes, we were going rather fast," admitted the driver of the machine, in response to a nudge from one of the women. "I think we will plead guilty."

"Where are you going now?" asked one of the ladies in the automobile party.

"I'm goin' back for more game," replied Tod. "I've got to have 'bout five dollars more before I'll have enough to buy turkey for all of us up to the poorhouse."

"Get in and we'll take you back,"

said the chauffeur, softly, and he seemed to have suddenly taken cold.

Once more Tod rode in the big red machine. This time it went straight up to the door of the almshouse, and when the man at the steering-wheel helped the old man down he pressed something that was crisp and crinkly into Tod's hand.

"It's for Thanksgiving," he said, as Tod gazed at the generous bill; and the man in goggles, wrapped his coat about him, for it was quite chilly.

Such a dinner as they had at the Morrisville poorhouse three days later! Never such plump, brown turkeys, never such rich gravy and dressing, such delicious cranberry sauce, such crisp white celery! Never such mince pies! Mrs. Zeke Jedell fairly outdid herself on the meal. And such appetites as everybody had!

"It's almost as good as havin' a big red automobile," said Tod. "I was afraid I wouldn't hev the spunk to stop 'em, but I did."

"My, but that's certainly a fine turkey!" spoke Sarah Tooker, with a sigh that expressed the deepest contentment. And all the others agreed with her.—Youth's Companion.

### SCIENCE & MECHANICS

Soda, in a 2-per-cent. solution, is recommended by Professor Esmarch, of Göttingen, as the best means of disinfecting eating utensils.

Fine dust mixed thoroughly with a small portion of clay has been used successfully as fuel at the Johnstown plant of the Cambria Steel Company.

The first telegraphic longitude station in Labrador has been established at Chateau Bay by Dr. Otto Klotz, Dominion astronomer, in conjunction with Sir William MacGregor, Governor of Newfoundland.

It has been suggested that the excellent showing made by steel cars in collision is due to the fact that the wooden cars in the train with them acted as cushions and lessened the force of shock.

At an inquest in London, a medical expert testified: "The man had a weak digestion, and if mushrooms are not quite fresh when eaten they are apt to have serious effects in the cases of persons with weak digestions."

Walter Rothschild, M. P., who recently spent three weeks at Caunterets, in France, near the Pyrenees, brought home to England with him nearly 4000 specimens of butterflies to add to the million he already has.

From a small beginning two years ago an arsenic mine near Elbe, Pierce County, Washington, has been developed until it is now producing twenty-five tons each twenty-four hours. It is the only mine in the country in which the arsenic is taken direct from the ore.

A storing of sun heat in some of the small salt lakes of Hungary was observed as far back as in 1861 by Kalesinsky, who recorded the results of his investigations in a paper before the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He showed the warm layer of the Szovata salt lakes, which lies at a certain depth below the surface between two colder layers and which is several meters in depth, to have necessarily derived its heat from the sun.

**Bees as Acrobats.**

When wax is needed a certain number of self-elected citizens gorge with honey and hang up in chains or curtains, each bee clinging by her front feet to the hind feet of the one above her, like Japanese acrobats, and there they remain, sometimes for two days, until the wax scales appear pushed out from every pocket. It is not hard to understand that, since much honey is needed for the manufacture of wax, a bee after billing with the raw material would produce much more wax by keeping quiet than by using any of the gorged honey for energy in moving about and working. But the necessity of "holding hands" while this work goes on must ever remain to us another occult evidence of the close relations in the bee commune.—Country Life in America.

**He Lasted Well.**

They were in the family portrait section of the gallery, and it seemed to Miss Goughly that her English visitor was deeply impressed.

"Yes, these are all my ancestors," she said, proudly. "Now, this is my great-grandfather, when he was a young man; of course, isn't he handsome? My grandfather used to tell me that his grandfather—the father's this one—was a splendid-looking man as long as he lived, and as popular with women as with men because he was such a hero."

"Brave? I guess he was! Why, he never fought in a battle that he didn't lose an arm or a leg or something from being right in front of everybody! He was in twenty-three engagements!"—Youth's Companion.

## SOUTHERN FARM NOTES.

TOPICS OF INTEREST TO THE PLANTER, STOCKMAN AND TRUCK GROWER.

### An Experiment With Geraniums.

I do not know of any plant which is mentioned in a florist's catalogue which so bravely endeavors to do its best under trying conditions as the geranium, writes A. Eva. No matter if the rain falls or there is an excess of damp weather for weeks, it continues to send forth its cheering brightness; and when hot wind and sun of drought wilt or destroy some other plants, it yet more proudly lifts its glories in defiance.

The most lovely geranium of the single flowered class I have ever owned or seen is the "Julia Marlowe."

It is said (and easily believed) to be one of the most exceptionally valuable novelties which spring up in plant life. The flowers are as perfectly formed and rounded as though made of wax.

In color it is a dazzling scarlet; the petals are broad and overlapping and form a flower which is fully two to two and one-half inches in diameter. The trusses are extremely large, and the plant attracts much attention.

Another geranium which I believe is without exception the most intense scarlet bedder known is "Le Soleil."

This is one of the double type and is extremely effective when planted in masses. The flowers are very large and held up by strong, straight stems, and resist both storm and heat.

No matter what the variety of geranium, I have learned that we must expect effects in accordance with the plant food which it receives.

Last year when transplanting them to the open ground, we made the soil rich with well rotted manure from the cow stable. The plants made an exceedingly rapid growth, with leaves which were remarkable as to size and deep coloring, but throughout the summer the flowers were so sparse that our disappointment was great. For some reason florists seldom, or never, refer to the proper balancing of plant foods when preparing soil for flowers, but I believe it fully as necessary to success in this work as in the growing of fruits and grains.

The fruit grower and the farmer knows that nitrogen in too great amount will cause too rank a growth of leaf and stalk at the expense of fruit or grain, but if the nitrogen is properly balanced with the two other important elements of all plant life, viz., potash and phosphoric acid, both fruit and grain will be perfectly developed.

It was plainly evident that my geraniums were given an excess of nitrogen by fertilizing with the barn manure alone, which is quite often very deficient in either potash or phosphoric acids, scientists tell us, and so I decided this past spring to experiment.

Before transplanting the geraniums, we thoroughly mixed with the soil of the bed, which was eight by two feet, a round quart of high grade fertilizer, such as we use for garden truck. This contains in 100 pounds of material, four pounds of nitrogen, seven pounds of available phosphoric acid and ten pounds of actual potash in the sulphate form.

The result has been most satisfactory. The geranium leaves have not been abnormally large, as were those of last year, nor too greatly abundant, but the flower stems seem almost countless and the trusses are enormous and of great brilliancy of color.

Plants of the same variety were again given the treatment of last year and proved as unsatisfactory. I think all flower growers will meet with better success in regard to profusion of flowers and intensity of color if they will mix some potash salt with the stable manure and soil, and I know the flowers are far more lasting than those grown with manure, without this addition.

**Lucerne on Sandy Soil.**

J. P. Pearson—Could sandy pine land with yellow sand subsoil be made rich enough to grow lucerne? What time should it be sown for winter pasture? Would it injure cotton to run one or two furrows to the row at this time of year and sow rye for winter pasture?

Answer—A sandy loam, made very rich, is the very place for lucerne (alfalfa), such a location and condition as would produce a fine yield of sugar-cane, or forty to fifty bushels of corn, would produce a satisfactory growth of lucerne. The proper time to sow the seeds is in September or October, after thoroughly preparing and fertilizing (or manuring) the land, provided you can have a good season in the ground—sufficient to bring up the seed promptly. If the seed lie in the ground until the winter rains set in and then come up, the chances are that the young plants will be killed by the first heavy frost. I advise you to sow in rows three inches apart, just as you would sow cabbage transplants, so that the land may be tilled with cultivator or scrape. Lucerne is not so well adapted to grazing and certainly should not be pas-

tured before it is in its third year, and then not heavily. It is particularly suited for green rolling and for hay. You may also sow the seeds in March or April.

It would not injure cotton in the least to sow in rye and cover in with two or three shallow furrows in one trip with a cultivator.—Professor Soule.

**Establishing a Blue Grass Sod.**

J. L. M. writes: How is the best way to get a good blue grass sod? What soils are most suitable for blue grass? What is the correct way to get the number of bushels of lime per acre?

It will take both time and patience and good farming to secure a good blue grass sod, some of the best sods I have ever seen being from twenty-five to 100 years old. Blue grass comes slowly and does not become well established for several years, but of course it will yield some grazing and continue to improve in quality if handled judiciously. Many persons make the mistake of not sowing blue grass at all, but rather wait for it to come naturally. This takes too much time, for one thing, and unless the conditions are very favorable the waiting may be in vain. On the other hand, many who sow blue grass attempt to graze it at the end of the first or second season and overstock the ground, with the result that the crowns of the grass are eaten down too closely and much of it dies, or at least it does not grow and spread as rapidly as it should and weeds come in and choke out what the cattle do not destroy.

Land intended for blue grass should be very carefully prepared and well enriched with farmyard manure, or if that is not available, a leguminous crop may be plowed under to advantage and supplemented with liberal applications of high-grade acid phosphate and potash, say at the rate of 200 pounds of the former and fifty pounds of the latter per acre. Be sure that the land is free from weeds. This may be accomplished by putting it in a hoed crop a year before seeding to grass and is probably a better and more satisfactory method than summer fallowing. Strong limestone soils are best suited to blue grass. It does not give good results as a rule on thin, light, leachy soils or very tenacious clays unless they are well underdrained. Blue grass loves lime, and where the underlying rocks are well supplied with this element, it generally provides satisfactory grazing when once well established. Dry, thin lands are not well adapted to this grass. This does not mean that it must of necessity be sown on low land, for blue grass in sections to which it is adapted does well on hilly, rolling land sufficiently porous to retain a good part of the water that falls on it as rain. It also gives its best results in semi-shaded pastures, as it does not like too strong open sunlight.

There are many ways of applying lime and it is hard to say which is the best. That depends a good deal on local conditions and on the lime used. There are many forms of lime sold on the market which can be distributed in the grain drill to advantage. A special drill is also made for the application of lime. It is not an expensive implement and provides one of the easiest and most satisfactory ways of distributing a substance which is very mean to handle. Lime can be applied by buying it in the unslacked condition and distributing it at satisfactory distances over the field, depending on the amount to be applied per acre, scattering over the ground uniformly after it is slaked and incorporating in the soil with a harrow. The distance apart to place the piles of lime on an acre of land depends on the rate of application. For instance, if you put the lime approximately, twenty-two feet apart in each direction and put half a bushel in each pile, you would be applying between fifty and sixty bushels per acre. If you put twenty-five bushels per acre, the distance of the piles would be twice as great, but twenty-five bushels is a light application. The ordinary grain drill will not apply lime in sufficient quantities for heavy applications unless it is especially constructed with that end in view. For ordinary farm practice lime can be distributed from the wagons in piles as suggested. Lime should be applied about two weeks before seeding, so that it will have no injurious effect on germination, and as a rule, it should be applied separately from any commercial fertilizer which may be used.—Andrew M. Soule, in Knoxville Journal and Tribune.

**Ex-Secretary of the Navy John D. Long** prefers to make a speech rather than to listen to one. He declares that both are boring.

"Shogreen," now applied to shagreen goods, came originally from the Persian word "saghin," which means the bark of a tree of burden.