

The Tenth Surprise - THE DUCHESS BREDENBUTTA'S VISIT TO TURVYLAND

The Duchess Bredenbutta was forty-seventh cousin to the Monarch of Mo and great-grandniece to the Queen; so you can readily see she was nearly related to the Princess Pattycake and had blue blood in her veins. She lived in a pretty house on the banks of Rootbeer River, and one of her favorite amusements was to row on the river in her boat, which, although rather small, was light as a cork.

One day, as usual, the Duchess went for a row on the river, expecting to return home in about an hour; but after floating a long distance down the stream she fell asleep in the boat and did not awake until she felt a sudden shock.

Then, sitting up and looking about her, she found, to her alarm, that the boat had drifted to the end of the Land of Mo, and was in the rapids leading to the Great Hole in the ground where the river disappeared from view. Becoming very much frightened, Bredenbutta looked for the oars of her boat, that she might row to the bank; but soon she discovered that the oars had fallen overboard and were lost, leaving her without any means of saving herself.

The poor Duchess now began to cry out; but no one heard her. Gradually the boat came nearer and nearer to the Great Hole, now bumping against the rocks and now spinning around with the current, until at last it paused for an instant on the very brink of the chasm down which the river fell.

The girl seized the sides of the boat in a firm grasp, and the next moment it plunged headlong into the Hole.

After the shock was over Bredenbutta wiped the moisture from her eyes and looked to see where she was, and what had become of her. She found that she had landed in a very remarkable country, and for a time could do nothing but gaze in wonder on the strange sights that met her view.

The trees were all growing on their top branches, with their roots high in the air; and the houses rested on the tops of their chimneys, the smoke going into the ground, and the doorsteps being at the tops of the

buildings. A rabbit was flying around in the air, and a flock of skylarks walked on the ground, as if they belonged there.

Bredenbutta rubbed her eyes, for at first the girl thought she must be dreaming; but when she looked again everything was in the same unnatural position.

To add to her amazement she now saw a queer creature coming toward her. She might have taken him for a young man, only he was just the reverse of any young man Bredenbutta had ever seen. He stood upon his hands, which were clad in boots, and used his feet as we use our hands, seeming to be very handy with his toes. His teeth were in his ears, and he ate with them and heard with his mouth. He also smelled with his eyes and saw out of his nose--which was all very curious. When he walked he ran, and when he ran he stood still. He spoke when he was silent and remained dumb when he had anything to say. In addition to this, he wept real tears when he was pleased, and laughed merrily whenever anything grieved him.

It was no wonder the Duchess Bredenbutta stared in surprise when such an odd creature came up to her backward and looked at her solemnly from his pug nose.

"Who are you?" asked Bredenbutta, as soon as she could find breath to speak.

The young man kept quiet and answered: "My name is Upsydown."

"I think you are," laughed Bredenbutta.

"You think I am what?" demanded the young man, the voice coming from his ear.

"Up-side-down," she replied.

At this retort the tears rolled down his cheeks with joy.

"Why, it is you who are up-side-down," he said; "how in the world did you get up here?"

"Down here, you mean," corrected the Duchess, with dignity.

"I mean nothing of the kind," he said, silently, while his nose twinkled with amusement; "this country is up, and not down."

"What country is it?" inquired Bredenbutta, much perplexed by such an absurd statement.

"Why, Turvyland, to be sure," was the answer.

"Oh!" sighed Bredenbutta; but she was no wiser than before.

"Now you are here," said Upsydoun, "you may come home with me and eat some dinner."

"I shall be very glad to," answered the Duchess, who was really hungry. "Where do you live?"

"Over there," replied Upsydoun, pointing to the south; "so stay where you are and follow me." Then he walked away on his hands in exactly the opposite direction from that he had indicated.

Bredenbutta followed him, and shortly after encountered several other people, of just the same queer appearance as her conductor. They looked out of their noses at her in great surprise, and, without speaking, asked Upsydoun who she was.

"The Duchess Bredenbutta," he silently answered, "I found her where the Rootbeer River bubbles up. Isn't she a queer-looking creature?"

"She is, indeed," they all answered, in a still chorus, and then they followed the girl out of curiosity, as boys follow a band or a dancing bear. When they reached the house of Upsydoun more than a hundred inhabitants of Turvyland were at Bredenbutta's heels and Upsydoun's thumbs.

She was welcomed very kindly, however, and the young man's mother kissed the Duchess with her left ear, an act which was considered a special mark of favor in Turvyland,

"Would you like to stand up and rest yourself until dinner-time?" asked the lady when the girl had entered the parlor.

"No, thank you," replied Bredenbutta, who was very tired. Being ignorant of their customs she did not know these people usually stood up when they slept or rested. Her answer seemed to satisfy Upsydoun's mother, who thought when she said "no" she meant "yes."

"You really don't look equal to lying down," she remarked, pleasantly; "so you may stand until I call you to dinner, which will be in a long time." Then she excused herself and walked backward out of the window, which Bredenbutta noticed they all used instead of doors.

"Dear me," said the Duchess, when she was left alone; "I am sure I shall never be able to understand these strange people. But I mean to sit down, anyway, and if it really is a long time before dinner, I shall probably starve in the meantime."

She had not rested more than a few minutes, however, before the lady again put her foot through the window, and waving it invitingly toward her exclaimed: "Go away to dinner."

"Go away!" replied the Duchess in dismay; "where shall I go to?"

"Why, to me, of course," answered Upsydoun's mother, dumbly; but she winked her nose thoughtfully, as if she scarcely knew how to converse with her strange visitor. Surely Bredenbutta ought to know that when they said "go" in Turvyland, they meant "come."

In spite of her uncertainty, she followed her hostess, and when they entered the dining-room the Duchess was shocked to see all the family stand on their heads on the chairs and pick up their knives and forks with their toes. She was more horrified, however, when they began to eat; for, contrary to all custom, these people placed their food in their ears. And they did it so calmly that she did not even remonstrate, remembering it must be their habit to eat in this way.

She, herself, sat down in her chair in a proper manner, and began to eat with the fork in her hand; and when the people of Turvyland saw this, they all shed tears of merriment.

Just then the youngest child of the family began laughing, and the mother rushed to it as fast as her hands could carry her, to see what was the matter. But the child had only put its foot into its pocket and could not get it out again. The mother soon managed to get it free, and then the child stopped laughing and began weeping as happily as any of the others.

Bredenbutta was greatly bewildered at all this, but she ate heartily, nevertheless, and after having begged her in vain to stand on her head, as they did, the family let her alone, being surprised to see how well she

could use her hands. After dinner Upsydoun's sister played on the piano with her toes, while the others indulged in a dance, whirling around on their thumbs in a manner truly marvelous, and seeming, by their tears, to enjoy themselves very much.

As the dance ended a kitten came running into the room on its ears and the tip of its tail, and this looked so funny that Bredenbutta began laughing. But seeing she had frightened her kind friends, who wanted to send for a doctor, she refrained from laughing, and asked, gravely, if she could not find a way to return to the Valley of Mo.

"The only possible way of getting down there," replied Upsydoun, "is to jump into the Rootbeer River; but that would be dangerous, and none of our people have ever tried it"

"Any danger," said the Duchess, "I will gladly brave; for otherwise I shall be obliged to spend my entire life down here, among people whose ways are exactly opposite to my own. If you will kindly take me to the river I shall lose no time in making an effort to return home."

They good-naturedly assented to this, and walked backward with her until they came to the place where the river bubbled up. It really did bubble up, Bredenbutta noticed, although she knew very well she had fallen down the Great Hole. But, then, everything was topsyturvy in this strange land.

The girl found her little boat, which had stranded on the beach, and having placed it where she could push it into the river, she turned to say good by to the queer people of Turvyland.

"I am glad to see you go," said Upsydoun, without speaking, "for I like you. But you are a strange creature, and perhaps know what is best for you. Here are some oars for your boat, for I see you have none, and when you get down to your country you may need them."

Bredenbutta joyfully accepted the oars, and placed them in her boat. Then the people of Turvyland all kissed her with their left ears and waved their toes in farewell, while the Duchess got into the boat and pushed it out into the river.

Instantly she was in the midst of such a whirling of foam and rushing and roaring of rootbeer that she could neither see nor hear anything. Gasping for breath, the girl clung tightly to the sides of the boat, and in a

few minutes it was all over, and the boat bobbed up in the Valley of Mo-- just above the Great Hole. Bredenbutta then seized the oars and rowed hard until there was no danger of her falling in again, and soon she had passed the rapids and was rowing safely up the river to her own home.

Of course the Duchess was very glad again to be among the people who acted in a natural manner, instead of the absurd fashion of her friends, the Turvylanders. She resolved that whenever she rowed her boat upon the river again, she would be careful to keep away from the Great Hole, for she realized that another visit to Upsydoun and his people would be very trying to her nerves.