

JONATHAN WOBBLER'S PIONEER EXPERIENCES.

JONATHAN WOBBLER had been a childless widower for three years or more when he took a sudden and uncontrollable desire to go west. He had read and heard so much of the wonderful fertility of the great west, of its marvelous growth and astounding public enterprises, that he grew weary of his dull, sleepy neighborhood, of its tiles and swamps, and longed to leave them all for the prairies of the far west, where people were "alive and pushy," he reasoned; where all was energy, bustle and activity; where the roads were neither hub deep with mud two-thirds of the year, nor so dusty as to almost smother the weary traveler the remaining third; where chinch bugs were unknown and stumps and stones unpleasant realities of the past only. In fact, the Hoosier state had become too contracted, too small and mean in every respect for the great and expanding soul of Jonathan Wobbler, and he desired to leave it all in disgust. Besides, Jonathan longed to speculate a little. He did not know anything of stocks, of course, nor of the manifold corners in corn or wheat, in lard or pork, and he was just a little too cautious to invest in anything he did not see his way clearly to a certain, swift and abundant profit; but he imagined he did understand land perfectly, wherever it might be, and as the land in his neighborhood had remained stationary in value for the last thirty years, with no prospect of it advancing one iota that he could see, during his lifetime at least, if not that of the generations yet unborn, he concluded that the Hoosier state was not the field for his talents, and he longed to depart for pastures new and growing.

Now, Jonathan had had bequeathed to him by his father two of the best tracts of land to be found anywhere in his county, one of one hundred and twenty acres and the other of eighty-five. The larger tract had to be tilled a little, not, however, to such an extent as to do it one particle of harm nor result in the outlay of much money, and besides being a marvel of fertility to any one but Jonathan, embodied as charming a little home as mortal could reasonably desire anywhere. The eighty-five-acre tract was not a whit behind in any respect, besides containing as neat and comfortable a little cottage as an ordinary, sensible man should wish for. But Jonathan's mental eye glasses were stained blue, and he therefore not only saw himself in a rather blue light, but all his friends, acquaintances and surroundings. He was weary of all that was blue, not knowing that it was simply the reflection of his own mind, and not the real condition of things, and he wanted a change—the rosy hue he imagined he would see farther on. He therefore sold his largest tract to an old neighbor at a sacrifice, tak-

ing half in cash and the balance in notes with long time payments, at low rates of interest, and if he could have disposed of the other, even at a greater sacrifice, he would only too willingly have done so. Fortunately for Jonathan, as subsequent events proved, he not only failed in getting rid of this piece of property, but also his household goods and farming implements. Not to be outdone, however, by so trifling a turn of ill luck, he removed all these goods to his remaining property, and left them in charge of a friend to dispose of as opportunities presented themselves. Jonathan was determined to go at any cost where land took a rise, occasionally, at least, and where people who were dead, figuratively speaking, did not walk around to disturb the living—like Jonathan—simply because they were too stingy to afford a funeral.

It was on a Thursday in April, 1884, that Jonathan bought his ticket for the great west. Late one night, the week following this momentous event, he arrived in a new railroad town in Eastern Washington. It was not long before he had selected his locality and his land, in one of the rolling prairie districts of that region, built a small house and gone to "batching" as of old. It was a long distance between settlements, and a longer distance to the nearest railway town, but the land was good, every acre of it; was just as pretty as a picture; within a mile and a half of a village just starting, whose prospects were simply astounding. It could not only claim the county seat, but two railroads within ninety days, a population of as many thousands as it then had individuals in even less time than this, and pretty much everything else worth having. Jonathan was in clover, knee high, figuratively speaking; he "struck it rich" beyond a doubt; so he bought several blocks in the prospective metropolis and awaited events.

It was not his forte, however, to wait. He did not come west to wait; for if this was what was necessary to acquire wealth, he could have done enough of that back in Indiana to acquire several fortunes. He came west to grow up rapidly; to avoid the waiting process. Any fool could grow rich by waiting, if he could only hold out long enough. "All things come to him who waits" was an adage that might suit Indiana, but not Jonathan. He might drop off to his eternal rest whilst waiting, and acquire nothing but debts, poverty and disgrace, as thousands do annually; and this is what has made waiting exceedingly unpopular, not only with Jonathan, but a host of Wobblers similarly imbued. So, when the ninety days had long passed and neither a railroad nor a county seat were yet visible from his shanty door, and the village had only increased by several inhabitants instead of thousands, Jonathan grew impatient and longed for