

The Custard Cup

By
FLORENCE BINGHAM LIVINGSTON

Copyright by George H. Doran Company

"CARED!"

SYNOPSIS.—Living in a barn, converted into a dwelling, Mrs. Penfield's manager of an apartment building known as "The Custard Cup," originally "Cluster Court." Her income is derived from laundry work, her chief patron being a Mrs. Horatius Weatherstone, whom she has never seen. Living with her are "Crink" and "Thad," homeless small boys whom she has adopted. They call her "Penzie." Thad tells Penzie a strange man was inquiring for her under her maiden name. A tenant, Mrs. Gussie Bosley, induces Penzie to take charge of a package, which she does with some misgivings. Searching a refuse dump for things which might be of value, Crink, veteran at the game, encounters a small girl, Little, who proves a foeman worthy of his steel. He takes her to Penzie, and Little gets adopted into the family. The stranger proves to be Mrs. Penfield's uncle Jerry. He announces he is going to remain in the vicinity of The Custard Cup. Uncle Jerry arranges to occupy the loft above Mrs. Penfield's abode. Uncle Jerry meets Prudence Haggard, no longer young, but attractive, and the two appear to "hit it off" well. Lorene Percy, young friend of Penzie's, tells her of her engagement to Dick Chase, also a mutual friend. Friendship developing between Uncle Jerry and Frank Bosley, husband of Gussie, worries Penzie.

CHAPTER VIII.—Continued.

"Yes, they keep me going." "So you see what I mean. I'm all alone—all alone."

"Yes."

"All alone!" repeated Mrs. Sanders. Her voice rising to a shriek. "Oh, it's awful. I never been alone before. I hasn't told you how twas, but—two years ago—I lost my husband—my mother—then my brother. It left me alone—absolutely alone. I don't get over it. Sometimes—" Her words sank. "Sometimes I think I shall go crazy—that I may end it."

Mrs. Penfield regarded her calmly. "Guess most of us feel that way, first or last. But it's only selfishness talking to us. Easiest thing we can do is to go."

Mrs. Sanders stopped in her pacing. The keenness of her astonishment drove the tension out of her bearing; she was suddenly limp from the shifting of emotion.

"You!" she exclaimed.

Mrs. Penfield gave her a smile that had nothing in it of amusement. "I," she confirmed. "My dear, you didn't suppose, did you, that the Lord had singled you out to see if He could break a string in your heart?"

"But you! I'd never thought as you!"

Mrs. Penfield's face settled into lines that Mrs. Sanders had not seen before—into the rigidity of forced control. "I don't speak of it," she said jerkily. "I can't. It hurts more. Ain't nobody here knows. . . . I had a pretty home once. My—my husband was a contractor; he had a fine income. We had th-three children." The words trailed into silence. Her brown eyes, with lengthened focus, were fixed on the wall beyond her hostess, as if she were seeing pictures out of a past that had receded but not grown dim.

Presently she went on, her voice lower, her breathing uneven, speaking more to herself than to another, so far was she withdrawn from the present. "We were happy—happy—until—There was an epidemic. The worst of it had passed. We had escaped; we thought we were safe. The relief from anxiety made us more thankful, happier, than ever. One night we—we had a jolly supper—the five of us, at the round-table. There was green peas and custard pie. Little David loved to see it tremble. . . . He was three. . . . His curly hair was like twists of sunshine, and his eyes were the deepest blue. . . . And Katherine and Bobby—They were all so well, rosy, full of laughter! But—that very night—first one and then another. . . . In the morning they were—gone. Think of it! Before day broke, they were—all my babies—gone!" Her eyes lifted; the lines of her face were twisted in agony. She had forgotten her surroundings, re-living those hideous hours.

"Oh, my dear," said Mrs. Sanders softly, "how did you ever stand it?" "Stand it?" Mrs. Penfield took up the words with momentary vehemence. "I didn't stand it. I went mad—mad, everything I'd ever believed in, went down." Her sad eyes came back to her neighbor's face. Mrs. Sanders' gaze had shifted to Mrs. Penfield's heavy hair, nearly white, strangely out of keeping with the look of youth that lingered in her features and expression.

Mrs. Penfield caught the glance. "It turned that night," she said indifferently. "It didn't matter."

"And you—your—"

Mrs. Penfield's lips worked. "It killed my husband," she replied slowly. "Not at once, but—he never got

over it. He was devoted to his family. He hadn't been well. . . . He ran down fast. We sold—traveled—ev'rything. . . . It didn't help. In six months—"

"Oh, my dear!" repeated Mrs. Sanders pityingly. "That was when—"

Mrs. Penfield nodded. "It would have been easy—so easy—to go, too. The hard thing was to stay—in an empty world. Nothing—"

"I know how you felt. You—you cared."

"Cared!" Mrs. Penfield's tone shook the word to shreds and cast it aside. "Part of me died—when he did. I hadn't never been the same. I try—but I can't."

Her voice broke. She wheeled swiftly and went over to the window. Standing with her back to the room, she stared into the meshes of the muslin curtain, beating the casing with her closed hand. Those blows, the outlet of long-suppressed torture, pounded into the silence of the room with uncanny contrast, as of physical violence upon some sacred stillness.

Mrs. Sanders scarcely breathed, awed into motionlessness by the depth of the anguish which she had unwittingly stirred. Her own grief was swallowed up in the grief of another.

At last Mrs. Penfield turned and came back. She walked firmly. Her eyes were brimming with tears, but there was a smile on her lips.

"I'm sorry I went to pieces so," she apologized. "I aim to keep my will power pressed down on my feelings; but if I take it off the least bit, they boil up as furious as ever. You mustn't think I'm complaining. I did for a spell, but I learned better."

"Sit down," begged Mrs. Sanders. "I want to tell you how I hate myself for being so selfish. I wouldn't have hurt you for the world. But I never dreamed—you're always so cheerful!"

"I'm cheerful, yes," acknowledged Mrs. Penfield sadly, "but once I was happy. I tell you what, Mrs. Sanders, you can be suspicious of the



Mrs. Sanders Scarcely Breathed.

feeler that's cheerful. He's been through something. Happiness is a thing that bubbles up naturally before you've had much experience, but cheerfulness is a thing you've reasoned out and stand by 'cause you believe it's right. There's a kind of happiness that never comes back, once it's gone."

They sat in silence for a moment, in closer communion than words had ever brought them.

"I know now," said Mrs. Sanders gently, "why you took those children."

An irradiated expression came into Mrs. Penfield's face. "Yes, you know now. I didn't do it at first. I got a position as housekeeper in a wealthy family. But I couldn't be satisfied, just supporting myself. I had to make a home again—and for somebody that didn't have one. Way it is, when you lose them that's dear to you, it kind o' opens your heart wider, and you got more love for more folks—stead of less. When I had children of my own, I thought 'bout them; but when I—I lost 'em, I began to think 'bout all the children, ev'rywhere—specially those that was handicapped and forlorn and didn't have a chance to grow up true to the souls that the Lord gave 'em. I came to see that I'd got to make a home for some of 'em, so I gave up my position and hunted up Crink, and then Thad. I can't earn so much money this way and it costs more to live, but I feel easier."

The hysterical frenzy had died out of Mrs. Sanders' expression. She looked at it as if she had laid hold of peace and poise. She took Mrs. Penfield's hand, in both her own.

"You will always be my friend," she said simply. "You've made me see how wrong I been going—letting my feelings collect inside of me till they fermented. Only way to keep

"I ain't goin' to have my yard all littered up."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Amended.

"Do you believe half of all you hear?" "No, only half believe all I hear."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

Jilted by 50 Girls, Takes 50 Poison Pills; Recovers

Hammard, Ind.—William Flaherty took 50 poison pellets when his fiftieth proposal of marriage was refused. He was turned down by 50 different girls. Flaherty is recovering.

BALKY MARE REFUSES GUIDANCE OF THIEVES

"Tessie" Whisks to Dinner and Leads Three Robbers Into Hands of Police.

New York.—A balky mare that refused to yield either to gentle or violent efforts at persuasion by three alleged horse thieves, frustrated the thief and was responsible for the imprisonment of the trio.

"Tessie," her owner, Walter Devlin, proprietor of a West Fifty-second street livery establishment, calls the mare. The police who seized Tessie's would-be abductors consider that she has more intelligence than some humans.

Attached to a funeral coach, the mare stood at Third avenue and Ninety-second street at noon. Her driver was in a nearby restaurant. A man climbed aboard the driver's seat and two piled inside the coach. Tessie obediently whisked them down Third avenue. Several times the driver sought to turn her into a side street. But it was the mare's dinner time, too, and she obstinately held to her course down Third avenue until she reached Fifty-second street.

There she turned west, her driver powerless to guide her elsewhere, and continued on until she reached her owner's stable. There she halted and refused to budge, although two passing detectives and Devlin himself, not recognizing the horse and rig, added their brands of persuasion to that of the trio who had appropriated them. Then Tessie's regular driver, who had been pursuing, ran up and preferred charges against the three alleged thieves, whom the detectives promptly arrested.

RESCUES SISTER FROM SNAKE

Poisonous Reptile Brought into School by Boy Is Revived by Warmth.

London.—A copper-colored poisonous snake three feet long suddenly made its appearance among 50 children in an elementary school at Morges, near Lausanne, during the temporary absence of the schoolmaster, notes the Geneva correspondent of the London Daily Express.

The reptile appeared angry and ready to strike. The children fled screaming with terror, save for one little girl, who stood paralyzed by fear as the snake reared its head at her feet. The child's older sister—just nine years old—returned to the room in search of her, and with great bravery dashed a chair on the snake and killed it.

When the schoolmaster returned he found all his pupils gone except the two weeping children with the dead snake at their feet.

It was afterward ascertained that a boy found the snake in a half-frozen condition and hid it in one of the school cupboards, where the warmth from an adjacent stove revived it.

FINGERS ARE SEWED IN PLACE

Lad May Regain Use of Members Crushed in Machine and Stitched Back on Hand.

Baltimore.—Three fingers were sewed back in place on the hand of Kermit Vaughan, thirteen years old, who became caught in a machine in the market stall of Edgar Levy. Physicians say he has an excellent chance to recover their use.

The boy was injured while he was operating the machine. His hand was caught in such a manner that the machine had to be taken to the hospital with the boy.

Piano Sounds Fire Alarm.

Harrisburg, Pa.—An electric piano sounded a fire alarm when a theater caught fire and was partly destroyed.

A passerby heard the piano playing, saw the flames, and sent in an alarm. A short circuit in the piano started the blaze, firemen said.

Man Shoots Son for Burglar.

Middleton, O.—Firing through the glass in a door at a supposed burglar, Peter Weik shot his son, Fred, fifteen years old. The son was not seriously wounded.

Cat Mothers Rat When Kittens Die.

Toronto, Pa.—A pet cat in the fiber board plant here is mothering a rat which she "adopted" when her three kittens died. The rat and the cat are together constantly and never fight.

Burns \$225 Hidden in Oven.

Baltimore.—It cost \$225 to crisp new bills when Mrs. Morris Girshis warmed up her home for visitors. The money was burned in the oven of a stove, where Mrs. Girshis had hidden it.

Raiding "Parson" Held.

Atlantic City, N. J.—The Rev. John E. Adams, the "raiding parson," is charged with "breaking and entering a saloon where he seized stills and liquor and made several arrests."

PROVED EFFECTIVE BY A FIFTY YEARS TRIAL

The most widely used remedy in the world to overcome the staggering effects of cataract. Cataract is silent and insidious in its ravage, invading nearly every household and loves every where.

ALLEN'S FOOT-EASE

THE ANTISEPTIC, HEALING POWDER FOR THE FEET

Takes the friction from the shoe, relieves the pain of corns, bunions, callouses and sore spots, freshens the feet and gives new vigor.

MAKES TIGHT OR NEW SHOES FEEL EASY

At night, when your feet are tired, sore and swollen from excessive dancing or walking, sprinkle Allen's Foot-Ease in the foot-bath and enjoy the bliss of foot without an ache.

Over One Million Five hundred thousand pounds of powder for the feet were used by our Army and Navy during the war. Trial package and a Foot-Ease Walking Doll Sent Free. Address

ALLEN'S FOOT-EASE, La. Roy, N. Y.

in a Pinch, Use ALLEN'S FOOT-EASE

DATA IS LOST YOUR SHOE

DATA IS LOST THE BAG

© H. A. K. O.

The Difficulty.

"Does the doctor hold out any hope of your Uncle Dob's getting well?"

"Oh, yes!" replied Zeke Sawney

Straddle Ridge. "He says that in

month or so Uncle Dob will be

able to whip his weight in wildcats?"

dickens of it is, when he gets well, where are we going to get the cats?"—Kansas City Star.

This Little One Had Colic for Three Months

"My baby suffered from colic three months and I was afraid I was going to lose her," writes Mrs. A. Tolbert, of Holley, Fla., "but she got over it when I gave her Teething and now I will never be without it, I give it to both my little ones. It keeps them well."

Colic is a very common complaint with babies and if not corrected time often leads to more serious disturbances. Teething corrects bad indigestion, relieves distress due

an overloaded stomach, cleans out bowels and regulates the system.

Teething can be had at any drug store or send 30c to the Moffett Laboratories, Columbus, Ga., and receive a large package and a free copy of Moffett's Illustrated Baby Book.—Advertisement.

Mechanical Bread Slicer.

A mechanically operated bread er, described in Popular Mechanics Magazine, is driven by a motor other suitable power, and has been designed for use in places where large quantities of bread are required.

leaves are placed in rows on a conveyor which carries them lengthwise to the knife where the slicing is done. The slices fall into pans on a second conveyor and are deposited in a basket or other container at the end of the machine.

5 Pass. Sedan \$860

f. o. b. Flint, Mich.



The All-Year Car for Every Family

for Economical Transportation



Chevrolet is leading in the great shift of public demand to closed cars because this company has the world's largest facilities for manufacturing high-grade closed bodies and is therefore able to offer sedans, coupes and sedanettes at prices within easy reach of the average American family. Six large body plants adjoining Chevrolet assembly plants enable us to make prompt deliveries of the much wanted closed cars.

As soon as you realize that your transportation requirements demand the year-round, all-weather closed car, see Chevrolet first and learn how fully we can meet your requirements at the lowest cost obtainable in a modern, high-grade closed automobile.

Prices f. o. b. Flint, Mich.

Two-Pass. Sedan	\$215