

# The Custard Cup

By Florence Bingham Livingston  
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CHAPTER X.—Continued.

"I didn't know about her—her helplessness," began Mrs. Penfield tentatively.

"Know about it?" He turned and confronted her in swift indignation. "Nobody knew about it till two days ago. She claims she hasn't been feeling well for a long time, but she's endured in silence. We've been trying to have her consult a doctor, but she won't listen to it—says we've no right to annoy an afflicted woman when she can do her own diagnosing."

"But you think there's—no doubt?" inquired Mrs. Penfield slowly.

"I think there's no doubt but that she's making the whole thing up," exploded the young man. "What I thought maybe you'd do, Mrs. Penzie, is to look us over from the standpoint of an outsider and tell us how to act."

She smiled. "I can't tell you on the minute, but I'll see if I can think out anything. I'll go over tomorrow, and maybe I'll get a line on it. You come around sometime soon, and I'll report."

He held out his hand. "Thank you. You're my mother, Mrs. Penzie, but I'll bet you didn't know it. I never had one that I could remember—till now."

Before she could speak, he was gone.

The next day Mrs. Penfield crowded her work as much as possible, that there might be time in the afternoon for a call on Mrs. Percy.

"Lettie," she called into the back yard, "won't you please pick me 'bout three of them pretty caterpillars off'n the willow tree? Put 'em in this here envelope, and be careful you don't squeeze 'em."

A little later Mrs. Penfield set forth gingerly concealing under her worn jacket the envelope which contained the three scraps of furry life. She stopped first at Mrs. Sanders'.

"Don't you want to run in to Mrs. Percy's with me?" she inquired. "I understand she ain't well, and seems as if we'd oughter be a mite neighborly."

"Oh, I hadn't heard," cried Mrs. Sanders, with instant solicitude. "Yes, sure I'll go."

The two ladies and the three caterpillars proceeded on their way.

When they had rung, they could hear Mrs. Percy coming along the narrow hall with a jerky, shuffling sound. She opened the door with her left hand.

"Good afternoon," she greeted them laconically. "Come in."

She ushered her guests into the tiny living-room and laboriously removed a litter of magazines from one chair, a piece of sewing from another. An awkward toss with her left hand sent a white crocheted shawl from a third chair to a small table. The three ladies were thus enabled to be seated.

"How are you feeling today?" inquired Mrs. Penfield briskly.

Mrs. Percy shook her head. "I've got my warning," she replied lugubriously.

"Warning!" echoed Mrs. Penfield. "Good land, what do you mean?"

Mrs. Percy's eyelids drooped mournfully. "I mean the forerunner of the—of the end."

"Oh, nonsense, I don't believe it," cheered Mrs. Penfield. "What's wrong?"

"You couldn't have been using your eyes," returned her hostess, in an aggrieved tone. "Maybe it doesn't show in my face—yet, but it's strange if you didn't notice the way I walked. My right foot drags. I can't scarcely use my right arm at all."

"How long have you had it?"

"Three days. It came on sudden—on one morning."

"I s'pose you've seen a doctor," suggested Mrs. Penfield.

Mrs. Percy sighed heavily. "No need. He couldn't tell me more'n I know. I've just got to wait—and grow steadily more helpless. The hardest part of it is Lorene's leaving. I shall be alone, and I can't do for myself now. Troubles always come together. I've been set against Lorene's marrying from the first. She might wait a while before she plunges; probably she'd marry better if she did."

Mrs. Penfield appeared to be pondering the situation. "I thought you felt that way, Mrs. Percy, but that's a slight trouble compared with your sickness, ain't it?"

"Yes, of course, but—"

"I'll just bet," exclaimed Mrs. Penfield with conviction, "that if you could use both your arms and legs all right, you'd feel that was the main thing. What Lorene done would be so small a point you wouldn't scarcely care which way it went, would you?"

Mrs. Percy opened her mouth; closed it again.

Mrs. Penfield's brown eyes grew wide in a stare of innocent surprise. "Why, land, you don't mean to tell me—for goodness sake, Mrs. Percy, if your body was all right again, wouldn't you be so thankful that you'd be more'n willing Lorene should leave you for a life of her own?"

A slight flush colored her hostess' heavy cheeks. "Why, yes, of course," she acknowledged stily. "I should feel very different in that case."

Mrs. Penfield nodded condolingly. "Yes, I guess you would. Health's the main thing. Little troubles don't seem no bigger's specks when a big trouble comes 'long to measure 'em up."

Mrs. Percy grabbed this statement with vehemence. "I don't know much about little troubles, myself. I've had big ones, one right after another. I haven't never been reconciled to Mr. Percy's going. Doesn't seem right for a man to die because he was brave, way he did. He was a police officer, and he was shot while making an arrest. It was reckless, the chance he took. It wouldn't seem so hard if he'd just been sick and died of it."

"Oh, you'd have felt it just as much," began Mrs. Sanders.

"Yes," echoed Mrs. Penfield; "and as 'tis, you've got something to be proud of. I've always thought I'd rather mourn for a man that was brave than cook for a man that's a coward."

Mrs. Percy, repudiating this consolation, tossed her head in some offense. "I didn't mean it would have been easy in any event. The thing, after all, that makes me miserable is my broken life. When you've had ten years of married happiness, you don't get reconciled to giving it up."

Mrs. Penfield gazed at her dreamily. "No, not reconciled! Being reconciled to ev'rything is a pretty good sign of moral prostration. But there's one thing you got to remember: if you had ten years of happy married life, you had exactly ten years more than a lot of women have, and you'd oughter be thankful for it, 'long with your mourning."

Mrs. Percy's lips came together with a snap. An uncomfortable silence spread over the room, pressing conversation out of existence. Mrs. Penfield, fearing that she had been too outspoken, sprang up briskly, with the thought of breaking the tension.

"You mustn't imagine I'm unsympathetic, 'cause underneath I been studying on how we could help you. I can see one thing we'd better do—that is, look out that you don't take cold, entertaining us in a room that don't get any sun. Here, let me put this little shawl 'round your shoulders. You mustn't take any chances, you know."

Without waiting for assent, she snatched the crocheted shawl from the table and proffered it to her hostess. And Mrs. Percy, the spoiled, the waited-on, was instantly mollified. She accepted the service with murmured gratitude.

No sooner had Mrs. Penfield resumed her seat, however, than it was Mrs. Percy who did the springing.

CHAPTER XI

Due to the Neighbors.

"Mis' Penfield, he half a yeast cake I owed you."

"Come right in, Mrs. Wopple. How are things going with you?"

"Pretty fair." Mrs. Wopple smoothed her afternoon gown complacently. "I had a heavy day. I been cleaning the best silver. I got so much, it makes my arm ache."

Mrs. Penfield could not decide whether it was good to have these many riches or bad to suffer for them, so she made no comment.

"I don't clean the kitchen silver reg'lar," continued her caller. "I just keep the sandsoap handy. But the other gets cleaned once a month. I keep house methodical."

"Ain't it fine you can!" remarked Mrs. Penfield genially.

"It's 'cause I plan," sniffed Mrs. Wopple. A shrewd gleam came into her eyes. "I understand the Bosleys had a quarrel this mornin'. I was told you was there, Mis' Penfield."

"Oh, Mrs. Bosley called me in to see 'bout the kitchen chimney. I don't draw. She thought mebbe—"

"Mis' Catterbox says they fit like wild animals. She heard 'em. Wasn't you there when it happened?"

"Mr. Bosley came in while I was there," admitted Mrs. Penfield.

"Well, I must say they got nerve, to fight 'fore outsiders," snapped Mrs. Wopple, who had rigid ideas about the privacy of this domestic privilege. "I s'pose you tried to interfere, Mis' Penfield."

"Me? Land, no. I never interfeared. I believe that all family fights are private, even if they're held in public. I don't scarcely think they knew I was there—and I wasn't, very long."

"I'll bet it was intrustin'," said Mrs. Wopple enviously. "But you needn't tell anything if you don't want to. Mis' Bosley told Mis' Catterbox a lot; said he struck her and she wouldn't stand it forever. Some say they're talkin' of goin' to Seattle."

"Oh, are they?"

Mrs. Wopple, highly dissatisfied with the outcome of this excursion into neighborhood news, tried once more. "Mis' Percy run in this mornin'. She's awful low in the dumps. She says she'll break up here if Lorene gets married."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Electricity and Brains.

A London dispatch announces that Dr. Bernard Holtzander in a public address has advanced the claim that brain power and the capacity for mental work may be increased and stimulated by the application of electricity (galvanic treatments) to certain regions of the head. Tests have been made, he stated, on a number of backward or indolent students, who through this method had been successful in passing examinations in which they had previously failed.

Mrs. Percy's eyelids drooped mournfully.

She came to her feet with a ponderous agility very different from her previous manner.

"Ugh! Ugh! The nasty thing!" she screamed. "Oh! Oh! Take it off! Oh! There's two of it! Take it—"

Mrs. Sanders plunged to the rescue. With a careless gesture, Mrs. Penfield swung in ahead of her. "I'll do it," she announced in a tone of renunciation with which one takes the initiative in a perilous enterprise.

"Help me!" cried Mrs. Percy. "They stick. Take the shawl."

With her left hand she was trying to disengage from the fuzzy shawl first one and then the other of two small caterpillars.

"Well, I declare to goodness!" exclaimed Mrs. Penfield safely. Her hands were busy with the shawl, but in some way, not explained, it had become entangled in the buttons of the green sweater, and it was not easily freed. Mrs. Percy's agitation steadily grew.

"They must have come in the window. I can't stand the nasty little things. Oh—oh, take it off. Tear it—anything! Oh—oh, good heavens, look, look!"

Her shaking finger pointed at Mrs. Penfield herself, and two curious things at once became evident. One was that Mrs. Percy was using her right hand; the other, that an active caterpillar was excursions up the front of Mrs. Penfield's dress.

"Well, did you ever!" interjected Mrs. Penfield.

But at this point Mrs. Percy decided that caterpillars were after her; and her nerves gave way. With a shriek, she wrenched and tore at the



Mrs. Percy's Eyelids Drooped Mournfully.

shawl, using both hands indiscriminately. Fairly beside herself, she stormed about the room, forgetful of feet that dragged, of legs that refused to be supple. She shivered and screamed and fought the air with nervous lashing of both arms. Her dark eyes shot mad glances in every direction, searching for more caterpillars.

"I know what 'tis," she howled. "It's a pest. We're going to be overrun. They'll come in the doors and windows. And I hate the crawling things. Oh, what shall we do? What shall we—"

Suddenly she stopped. Her arms dropped. She had become conscious of the interested, significant gaze of her guests—a gaze that reminded her of many things.

"Ugh!" she cried. "Ain't this awful? I'll suffer for it later."

Mrs. Sanders clasped her hands fervently. "Oh, I'm so glad it happened. There ain't no more caterpillars here; I've looked. And they—they've brought you out of it."

Mrs. Percy gasped. "It was—it was only a superhuman—"

"No, Mrs. Percy," broke in Mrs. Penfield brightly. "I been watching how you did it, and it was just as natural as could be. You'll find it'll be permanent—mark my words. It's plain as can be that the whole trouble was nerves getting wound up, on account of worrying, mebbe; and they've unwound now. Any doctor'd tell you that you've limbered up to stay. Why, don't you believe it? Well, then, I'll tell you what: we'll have a doctor in to tell you yourself. We ain't got to have you fretting over something that don't really all you."

Mrs. Percy looked at her helplessly, with a smoldering fire in her black eyes. "Much you know about it. I expect it'll come back—"

"No, it won't," said Mrs. Penfield firmly. "If it does, we'll have the doctor, 'cause The Custard Cup ain't going to see you suffer 'bout helping you out. We're your friends."

"Oh—oh, yes, I—"

A bright look flashed across Mrs. Penfield's face. "Oh, won't Lorene be happy? I can't wait to tell her. And now there ain't nothing standing in her way. Doesn't it seem like a providence that you said you wouldn't object any more if—"

"I—I didn't say—" interposed Mrs. Percy hotly.

Mrs. Sanders' eyes were very wise. "Oh, yes, you did, Mrs. Percy. I heard you."

Mrs. Penfield extended her hand with a genial smile. "I am so truly glad," she said in a low, deep voice, "so glad that it wasn't anything serious. Folks are likely to think the worst, but you mustn't do it again. Come over and see us both real soon. It'll do you good to get out, and we'll both be awful glad to see you."

# PROMINENT PEOPLE

## Labor Union Runs "Open Shop" Mine



In eastern Kentucky the miners are not organized. They can form a union if they want to. We pay the prevailing rate of wages, and we have not sought to compel the men either to stay out of the union or go into it.

The Coal River Colliery company is largely owned by members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. A \$2,000,000 corporation was organized during the coal strike of 1922, the mines purchased, and in the announcement of policy it was stated that the company, unlike other corporations, "had a soul."

"We ask no man's union affiliations."

Some humorous people will doubtless get a laugh out of this utterance. Anyway, it's Warren S. Stone who is speaking and Warren S. Stone is grand chief of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, one of the oldest and strongest labor unions in the United States. It is his answer, as chairman of the board of directors of the Coal River Colliery company, operating mines in West Virginia and eastern Kentucky to the statement of Fred Mooney, secretary of District 17, United Mine Workers of America, that the International Miners' union had called a strike at these mines because of the adoption of the "open shop" policy.

"At our workings in West Virginia we pay the union scale," Stone explained at his offices in Cleveland, O. "Men may join the union or stay out."

## Mrs. Stillman Shares in the Limelight

Mrs. Anne U. ("Fifi") Stillman (portrait herewith) is back in the public eye in connection with the famous divorce case. "Flo" Leeds started the present excitement by coming back from a European trip and announcing that Stillman had transferred his affections, leaving her broke. She also had an idea that it might be necessary for her to sue Stillman for funds wherewith to support her boy, Jay Leeds.



Thereupon Mrs. Stillman declared her willingness to adopt Jay—provided, of course, his mother made herself scarce. "Nay, nay," said Mrs. Leeds, "my boy needs a mother's love," and that settled that. However, it does look as if the two women may get together on some basis in an effort to make it uncomfortable for the man in the case.

Reporters found Mrs. Stillman at Grand Anse, P. Q., where she is recuperating. "Affinity No.—whatever it is," she remarked, "is being provided for on the same lavish scale as the others. But she will be thrown over like the rest," she added with a mirthless laugh. "First it was I, then it was Flo Leeds, and now it's this new one. They will all go the same way."

## World War Vet Will Keep Denver Clean



Rice Williams Means was born in 1877 at St. Joseph, Mo., is a college man and began law practice in Denver in 1901. He was county judge of Adams county, Colorado, 1902-4. He enlisted in the Colorado N. G. in 1895 and served with distinction as an officer in the Philippines. In the World War he commanded the Fourth United States Infantry in the Meuse-Argonne campaign and later the One Hundred and Fifty-seventh Infantry.

Colorado and Denver have been much in the limelight of late. For one thing the Centennial State elected a Democratic governor of radical tendencies, who appointed a Progressive United States senator to succeed the late Senator Nicholson. For another, Denver staged a long and bitterly fought prosecution of its notorious "million dollar bunko ring," securing 20 convictions and sentences ranging from one to ten years in the penitentiary. A third sensation was a red-hot mayoralty election, fought out on a "clean-the-city" issue, in which a "dark horse" third candidate, unsupported by the press, won handily. Mayor Stapleton is a good man, however, and he has now appointed Col. Rice W. Means (portrait herewith) as commissioner of safety and excise. Colonel Means is a lawyer, jurist and soldier. The appointment is taken to mean that discipline will be restored in the police department.

## Heads Both Illinois and Chicago Bars

Roger Sherman of Chicago (portrait herewith) is the new president of the Illinois State Bar association. The other officers elected at the forty-seventh annual convention at Peoria are first vice president, C. M. Clay Buntain, Kankakee; second vice president, John R. Montgomery, Chicago; third vice president, George H. Wilson, Quincy; secretary, R. Allen Stephens, Springfield; treasurer, Franklin L. Velde, Pekin.



Mr. Sherman was also president of the Chicago Bar association at the time of his election—a situation obtaining for the first time in the history of the state. He is the youngest of the five sons of Penoyer L. and Louise Dickinson Sherman. His father was a lawyer and master in chancery in Chicago from 1853 to his death in 1911. Roger Sherman was born January 4, 1872, in the old Sherman homestead in Hyde Park, built in 1856. He got his academic and legal education in the Hyde Park high school, University of Michigan ('94) and Northwestern University Law school ('95). Michigan has him enrolled in its football records as one of the best of its quarterbacks. In 1905 he married Grace Trussdale Buttolph of Chicago, daughter of Albert C. and Louise Fuller Buttolph. He has two daughters and lives at Winnetka, Ill. Mr. Sherman is a ninth-generation American, the direct descendant of Rev. John Sherman of Watertown, Mass., noted theologian, astronomer, pulpit orator and founder of early New England cities. He is named for his famous collateral relative, Roger Sherman, one of the committee of five to draw up the Declaration of Independence and one of the makers of the Constitution.

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Georgia Lady Says She Has Avoided Much Suffering by Taking This Well-Known Tonic Medicine.

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"Before the birth of two of my children, I grew so weak and nervous I could hardly go and suffered... I had a friend who told me of Cardui, so the next time when I grew so weak and run down I began to use it. I used it three months. I grew stronger and less nervous. The baby was stronger and a better baby, and I really believe it was because I built up my strength with this splendid tonic."

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