

# The Custard Cup

By Florence Bingham Livingston  
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CHAPTER XII.—Continued

"Oh, gee!" he gasped, recovering himself. "Who'd think Penzie'd string you like that?"

At the words, the child's fear was swallowed up in recurring anger. Her beloved Penzie had been criticized.

"Don't you dare talk 'bout Penzie," she flashed. "Get out—here, you nixy stiff! Get out—!" She dashed toward him with outflung arms, as one might to frighten a small animal; then stopping so abruptly that she swayed dizzily for a moment. "Excuse me," she muttered. "O Lord!" She turned and flew into the house, banging the kitchen door behind her. The minutes that supervened were troubled by a thudding thumping, as of a drum gone wrong.

When Lettie reappeared she was carrying an armful of boards, a tomato can of old rescued nails, and a hatchet with a notched blade. The household did not possess a hammer, an implement too highly specialized to be afforded; the hatchet had squeezed in by its diversity of service.

Frank Bosley was still there, sitting on a small stump, smoking a cigarette. He watched lazily while Lettie spread her materials down on the walk.

"What's the nifty notion?" he drawled.

She gave him a brief glance. "You here yet?"

"Sure, and talking. I asked, what you making?"

"I'm going to make a coop for—"

She broke off and sat back on her heels, considering.

"For the pepper-and-salt shipwreck?" he put in helpfully.

"Tain't a shipwreck," defended Lettie. "It's a Plymouth Rock, guaranteed, and it's going to be a good one. I gotta name her." She reflected deeply, trying out names soundlessly, with lips moving. "I'll call her Bonnie Geraldine," she said aloud.

This decision, honoring the two daughters of Mrs. Weatherstone, was the highest kind of tribute, being spontaneous and given without intention of flattery. The young ladies were only names to Lettie, who had no more thoughts of ever seeing a Weatherstone than she had of glimpsing the North pole, rising out of its cask of ice and bearing aloft the flags of the various nations that have discovered it.

"Better call it the Calico Curiosity," he suggested between slow puffs.

Lettie bit her lips till the color left them. Taking up two pieces of board, she propped them together to see if they would form the conventional gable roof of a chicken coop. They would not. With a sigh she discarded one and took up another.

"You can't do it," observed the man. "You don't know how."

"Why don't you help me, then?"

"I? Child, I have better things to do."

"Yes, you have!" she retorted. "Such as sinking in the basement door to see the cross-eyed man!"

With his finger on the clasp of his cigarette case, he paused. Lettie, watching him calmly, was quick to see that her shot had told.

"And the little man that carries a cane," she continued.

"If I was in your place," Lettie proceeded with relish, "I wouldn't leave my machine in the same spot all time. It's kinder noticeable, 'tween them two eucalyptus trees on Everidge street, and— Here, Bonnie Geraldine," she commanded, turning to her new acquisition, "stop flopping 'round so. That dog ain't going to hurt you. Here, good old Fil, treat her decent, can't you? You gotta get acquainted and be friends. How can I love you both if—"

She heard steps behind her. Switching about, she encountered the white anger of Frank Bosley.

"You limp of Satan!" he growled. "Hold your tongue in your head if you don't know how to use it. You hain't never seen me in any such place. If you want to play safe, you won't get me mixed with somebody else and go blabbing."

Lettie stood up and confronted him coolly, thin shoulders thrown back, dark eyes undaunted.

"If it wasn't you, what're you getting so mad for? How do you know I ain't praising you?"

"I don't care what way 'tis. Whoever you saw, 'twan't me. D'you understand? You needn't get me mixed up with anybody else."

"I hain't got you mixed up, Mr. Frank Bosley. I got your number, and I know a lot I hain't told. I seen you three fellers more'n once; and way you sink, I know you're 'shamed of something. All is, if you want me to keep still, you get outa here and keep away from Uncle Jerry."

With an assumption of recovered composure, he returned to the stump, took out another cigarette, struck a match, and contemplated the child with well-stimulated indifference.

"Don't worry, spiffie."

Lettie was immensely disappointed. She had thought she was making headway, and here she was back where she had been in the first place. It took scarcely ten seconds for her anger to rise.

"Get outa here," she shrieked. "Get out and keep out."

"Dry up," he retorted. "I've heard 'nough from you, young lady. I didn't come here to be sassied. I came to see you Uncle Jerry, and right here I stay till he comes."

"No, you don't! No, you don't, snore!" Lettie. "You're going now,

or I'll— Oh, by jingoos, there I go again! Excuse me, I gotta—"

Black curls lashing her thin shoulders, she sprinted to the steps and clipped into the kitchen. The wooden tattoo began again and continued steadily for some time. When it finally ceased, Lettie came back wearily and threw herself down on the walk. Turning all the nails out of the tin can, she proceeded to sort them according to their degree of curvature, few of them being straight.

"Bonnie Geraldine," she said so. l. y. "you sit right still. You're going to be well pretty soon." She threw a nail back into the can, as being beyond her skill in driving. She looked up at Bosley.

"I really wish you'd go home," she urged, in a voice of great reasonableness. "We don't want you here; honest, none of us do. We don't think you're a good friend for Uncle Jerry and—"

An insolent laugh interrupted her plea.

"I mean it," she continued, with growing vehemence. "We don't like you to come here. Please go away."

"Dry up, you little fool. I'm tired of your patter. Ah, there you are, Winston. Say, old man, I thought you'd never come. How does it look?" Jerry Winston walked into the yard.

"Pretty good, I guess. Let's get somewhere and talk it over."

Lettie had risen and was watching them anxiously, her large eyes widening as her dismay increased.

"Come on over to my house," suggested Frank Bosley.

"All right."

Lettie stepped forward. "Uncle Jerry," she begged, "don't go with that man. Penzie doesn't like it."

Jerry Winston fixed her with a look such as she had never before received



"Uncle Jerry," she begged, "Don't Go With That Man."

from him. "Keep still, Lettie, and mind your own business."

"But, Uncle Jerry," she gasped, "you mustn't. It's making her unhappy. Oh, please don't."

"Lettie," he returned, in a tone that pierced her heart, "you tend to your own business, I tell you. You're making a big mistake. I choose my own friends, and I choose good ones, too."

"Oh—oh—oh!" she screamed, wringing her hands in agony. "I can't have it. I can't stand it. It makes her so unhappy. Oh, Uncle Jerry, you got me going. Come back, or I'll—"

She reached over and gathered up a handful of nails; then dropped her hand. The nails fell with a jangle on the board walk.

She was alone. Uncle Jerry had gone with Frank Bosley. During the moment that she realized her failure to frustrate this friendship, her breath stopped, from the most acute despair. Then her anger rose, mounting to rage—against Uncle Jerry, against Frank Bosley.

"I'll show him; I'll show him!" she vowed in a fury. On a mad impulse she tore around the house—then whirled and tore back again. "O Lord," she groaned, "why can't I remember? I gotta remember, 'cause I gotta stay with Penzie."

Again she peeped into the kitchen and reached for the toy rolling-pin. Violent blows rained on the board—blows of rage against the two men, blows of exasperation over her failure, blows of wild wrath against her own temper.

"Devil, you shan't have me. You shan't; you shan't. Devil, do you hear? You shan't—have me!"

Over and over she uttered this defiance, and with every word she struck the gong till the heavy board swung against the wall.

"O Penzie," she sobbed brokenly, "I'm trying—I'm trying. Honest, I'm—"

On and on she pounded, her emotion reaching frenzy, a frenzy like that of the worn piper who dances till he falls. Her arm ached, but her energy did not relax. Her blood went queer,

like a great wave, leaving her head cold. Then another great wave that flooded her with heat, rolled over her, shut off her breath, receded! A black wave!

She was still lying there on the floor beneath the temper gong when Mrs. Penfield came in—her face white in its frame of black curls, her right hand limp on the rolling-pin that had come down with her on its broken string.

## CHAPTER XIII

### Calamity Coal Oil.

The days of Lorene Percy's engagement had been stormy ones in her home, but through neighborly persuasion and intercession, Mrs. Percy had raised no permanent obstacle. Lorene's friends felt certain that her release from home rule was assured.

It was the evening before the marriage ceremony. All the little Penfields had long since retired to their sleeping-boxes; and that they might not be disturbed by the light, Mrs. Penfield was sewing in the kitchen. It was late and she was very tired. Twice she had caught herself napping and had gone to the back door to breathe in the fresh air and get thoroughly awake again. The moon was full; the sky was intensely blue except where quills of white cloud were laid across it; the back yard was filled with soft radiance that transformed the ugly clothes-poles into slender shafts of light.

"What a beautiful world it is!" she said to herself. "And we all go so fast that we don't have time to look at it the way it is. I wonder why we get fretted up over a lot of pesky details that we forget all about in a week, when the universe is calm and happy. Looks like we ain't in harmony with it. I wish I had time—No, I don't. What I wish is that I can stay awake and sew an overcoat."

Resolutely she went back to her chair and fitted sections of the coat together.

Footsteps sounded on the board walk. There was a quick knock. The door opened.

"Oh, I knew something would happen. I just knew it would. And it has. Oh—oh!"

Mrs. Penfield sprang to her feet. The voice was familiar, but she would hardly have recognized, without this evidence, the figure that confronted her.

"Lorene!" she gasped.

"Look at me!" cried the girl. Her tragic tone emphasized her ludicrous appearance. Her face and hands were covered with fine soot, in flecks, in streaks; her fair hair was curiously darkened, as if a thin black veil had been drawn over it; her light blue house dress looked greasy and soiled.

"Why, my dear, I can see you've had a little accident," said Mrs. Penfield briskly, "but 'twon't take long to get you washed up again. I'll help you. Oil heater, I s'pose."

The girl nodded. "My—Mrs. Percy lighted it and put it in my room. I was going to pack. She said I'd take cold if the room wasn't warmed. And—and when I went in a few minutes later, I couldn't see. The air was full of black soot—everywhere—clouds of it. Oh, dear; oh, dear, what can I do?"

"Why, Lorene, I'll help. We—"

"Mrs. Penzie," shrieked the girl, wringing her hands in distress, "you don't understand. Everything is ruined."

"E'rything?"

"Yes, everything. All my clothes! I had them all laid out, ready to pack—on the bed, the chairs. The clothes-press was open. They're all black, sticky, spoiled!" She threw herself on the wash bench and broke into wild sobbing. "Why, by the time I'd been in there two minutes—look at me!"

"Oh, my dear," begged Mrs. Penfield, "don't cry. We've got to think of something."

"We can't," wailed the girl. "There isn't anything to be-begin on. They were all there—everything I own in the world, everything I've been saving for—all these mo-nonths." She lifted her head and looked at Mrs. Penfield with streaming eyes. "Yes, I suppose they can be cleaned, but there isn't time before tomorrow. There isn't ti-ftime." Her voice broke. "Dick has his leave of absence and the tickets and all the de-details arranged. We can't put it off—and—and we can't—I can't be m-m-married like this, can I?" She threw out her arms in a gesture of helplessness.

Mrs. Penfield could not restrain a smile as she gazed at the forlorn bride-elect, huddled on the wash-bench, too abject to realize her own appearance at the moment or to care about it compared with the greater calamity at home.

"What can I do, Mrs. Penzie? I can't ask Dick to take me like this."

"No, dear, you aren't going to." Mrs. Penfield put her hands on the girl's shoulders and gave her a gentle shake that was half reproof and half reassurance. "Grab your nerve, Lorene, and we'll work a way out of this. So long as there ain't nothing more vital in the path than soot and cinders, I predict you're going to be married tomorrow noon, as scheduled—and all fresh and dainty, too. You left your windows open, didn't you?"

"Oh, yes, but—"

"Then the air must be clear by this time. I'll turn out the lamp, and we'll go right over and see how things look."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL Sunday School 'Lesson'

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D. D.,  
Teacher of English Bible in the Moody  
Bible Institute of Chicago.)  
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### LESSON FOR JULY 15

SIMON PETER

LESSON TEXT—Matthew 16:13-18; John 21:15-7.  
GOLDEN TEXT—'Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee.'—John 21:17.  
REFERENCE MATERIAL—John 1:35-42; John 18:10-11; 20:1-10; 21:1-23; Acts 2:1-6.  
PRIMARY TOPIC—Peter, the Helper of Jesus.  
JUNIOR TOPIC—The Leader of the Twelve.  
INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—Peter's Failures and Successes.  
YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—Peter's Weaknesses and Strengths.

I. His Name. (John 1:42).  
The name which he bore when introduced to Christ was Simon, which means "hearing." But Jesus gave him a new name—"Peter," which means "rock." This showed what he was to become.

II. His Call. (John 1:41, 42).  
His brother Andrew brought him to Christ. This brought him into fellowship with the Lord. From ordinary discipleship he was called to special ministry (Luke 5:10). From being a fisherman he was called to catch men.

III. Peter's Character.  
1. Sincere. What Peter was at heart could be read on his face. He was free from duplicity. People could understand him. Because of this characteristic they could tell when he was lying. Yet even when people knew he was in error they could believe in him. He seems to have been ignorant of the word "diplomacy."

2. Prompt. He had the ability to decide and act quickly, as the occasion demanded. This made him a real leader. His action at the empty tomb was an example of his promptitude. John outran Peter, but Peter was the first to enter the tomb. When Cornelius sent for him at Joppa he responded without delay.

3. Courageous. While Peter played the coward sometimes, he was for the most part a brave man. No doubt it was through cowardice that he denied the Lord, but it was his courage that brought him to follow the Lord into the palace of the high priest.

4. Intense. He felt keenly and acted with vigor. Whether right or wrong, what he did he did with all his might. When he preached it was with passion. No finer example of burning eloquence can be found than his Pentecost sermon.

IV. Peter's Confession of Christ (Matt. 16:13-18, 21-23).

The disciples had been with the Lord for several years. They had heard His mighty words and seen His mighty works. Various opinions were extant about Him. It was now necessary for them to have a definite conception of Him. The Master-Teacher knew the necessity of having the disciples get the right conception of Himself.

1. What It Was (v. 16). It involved His Messiahship—"The Christ," and delty—"Son of the living God." This is the burning question today. Those who have the right conception of Christ's person and mission have no trouble in the realms of science, philosophy or ethics.

2. Christ's Commendation (v. 17). He pronounced him blessed. Truly he was blessed, for he both possessed and confessed the Christ. The evidence that Peter was blessed was that he was in spiritual touch with the Father in Heaven.

3. Peter's Blessing (v. 18). Christ declared that he should be the foundation stone in His church. Christ is the chief cornerstone on which the church is built. Christ's person and Messiahship was confessed by Peter, and on this rock is laid the foundation of apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20). All believers are living stones of this house (1 Peter 2:5).

V. Peter's Restoration (John 21:15-17).

Peter grievously sinned in denying the Lord, but he made a confession, shedding bitter tears of penitence over his sin and folly. The Lord tenderly dealt with His erring disciple and restored him. In this restoration He brought to Peter's mind the essential qualification for his ministry. Love is the pre-eminent gift for Christ's service. To impress this upon him, he three times asked the question, "Lovest thou me?" Three classes of people were to be served: (1) Those beginning the Christian life—"Feed my lambs." (2) The mature Christians—"Shepherd my sheep." The shepherd needs to protect and feed the sheep. Love is the one essential equipment for this service. (3) The aged Christians—"Feed my sheep." Love is needed in dealing with the fathers and mothers in Israel.

#### Injuries.

Rather wink at small injuries than to be too forward to avenge them. He that to destroy a single bee should throw down the hive, instead of one enemy, would make a thousand.

#### Trust in the Lord.

Trust in the Lord and do good: so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.—Ps. 37:3.

#### The Student.

Don't despair of a student if he has one clear idea.—Simmons.

## 3 YEARS WITHOUT WORD WINS WIFE A DIVORCE

Sat Opposite Husband Every Day  
at Luncheon, She Says—  
Cruel, Says Court.

London.—A wife who said that her husband had not spoken to her for three years and two months, although they sat opposite each other every day at their midday meal, was granted a decree nisi of divorce in the courts last week, the judge holding that this unusual conduct amounted to cruelty and desertion.

The wife, Mrs. Ada Diver, said she was married in 1889 and that she and her husband were quite happy until 1920, when she had a nervous breakdown and went to stay at her mother's house for a few weeks.

For twelve months after that they lived in the same house and had one meal, luncheon, together each day, but did not speak.

She left him, but returned in a short time, and though her husband then slept elsewhere, he still came home for luncheon and continued doing so until last week, though refusing to speak a word to his wife, the silence being maintained altogether for more than three years, she said.

## Runaway Tricks Police; Thieves Get Diamonds

New York.—After frightening a horse to divert attention from themselves, two bandits recently smashed a window in the Rundback Jewelry store, 2232 Third avenue, fired a bullet at one of the proprietors and fled in a taxicab with a tray of diamonds valued at \$40,000. The robbery happened shortly after 9 o'clock, when the streets of Harlem were filled with Saturday night shoppers.

The store has been robbed twice in the last year and, although the loss in each instance was not great, Patrolman John Lloyd of the East One Hundred and Twenty-sixth Street station has since kept a careful watch on the place. Just before the robbery, a horse hired from a livery stable at 345 East One Hundred and Third street bolted, and the policeman ran after it. A moment later came the crash of glass as the store window was smashed.

Persons who happened to be in the block between One Hundred and Twenty-first and One Hundred and Twenty-second street said they saw two young men leap from a taxicab at the curb just as the policeman raced after the horse.

One of them hurled a brick through the show window and the other quickly reached through, taking out one of several trays of gems. John Rundback, who owns the store with his mother and his brother, Edward, rushed to the doorway and one of the bandits fired at him, but the bullet went wild.

The two robbers then jumped into the taxicab, which was a few feet away, and drove out of sight before Policeman Lloyd had finished calming the frightened horse two blocks distant. No one could be found who could account for the animal running away, but the police believe some one in league with the bandits was responsible.

## Disease Makes Her Talk Almost Continuously

Parsons, Kan.—Talking almost continuously since last Thanksgiving, and still going strong, is the unique record of Miss Mildred Spencer, twenty-year-old schoolma'am of this city. Miss Spencer, while visiting her home in Baldwin in the Thanksgiving vacation, prattled incessantly of "cabbages and kings," but the family thought she was only overjoyed to return. But when she awakened her mother night after night to continue the talk-fest, the family became alarmed.

Several weeks ago the patient was brought to a local sanitarium, where physicians diagnosed her malady as "talking sickness."

Miss Spencer is widely read and has a wealth of material upon which to enlighten attendants. She rarely repeats herself.

A cure within a few weeks is promised by physicians.

## Arrested for Speeding, Has Latest in Alibis

Woodlawn, Cal.—J. R. Lemon of Sacramento has been awarded first honors for offering alibis in the local justice court.

When Lemon was overhauled by Officer George Sharpneck recently he was doing 45 miles an hour.

Lemon wrote to Justice of the Peace W. H. Scott as follows:

"I could not help my speed for the suction of a passenger train passing through Davis drew me along."

## Child Found Lunching on a Stick of Dynamite

Mrs. C. E. Brewer of Kansas City, Kan., was amazed to find her three-year-old daughter seated on the step of a rear porch complacently chewing on a half-pound stick of dynamite. She separated the baby from its "lunch" and called the police. Other children, who had been playing in the yard, explained that the baby found the explosive in a bunch of wire. No ill effects followed the dynamite menu.

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### THING OF MOST IMPORTANCE

Idle to Think Woman Would Look at  
Her Teeth When Her Hair Was  
in Consideration.

The dentist was busy filling a young woman's teeth. When he had finished the first tooth he handed her a mirror that she might see the result for herself. Then he continued his task, each time handing her the mirror after a tooth had been filled. Finally, when his task was completed and she had handed back the mirror with thanks he asked:

"Well, Mrs. Danforth, how do they look to you?"

"Look to me? Why, I haven't seen them yet!" she exclaimed.

"I mean the teeth I have just filled," said the dentist, thinking she had not understood.

"Oh, I forgot about the teeth," she replied as she reached for the mirror.

"What did you look at each time then?" queried the dentist, wonderingly.

"Why, my hair of course,"—Harper's Magazine.

Everybody Knows How.  
"Have you ever noticed?" asks the Maryville (Mo.) Democrat-Forum, "how everybody knows how everybody else should do something?"