

# The Custard Cup

by  
**Florence Bingham Livingston**

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alone memories, either! The tree was still there, and Christmas day was yet to come.

"My landy goodness!" cried Lettie. "I don't never want to see anything sweller'n that party was. It sure hit the stars for class."

"I guess we're pretty rich," piped Thad, skinning a finger of fir to determine exactly how sticky it was.

"We sure got rich feelings," agreed Mrs. Penfield. "And that's as much as millions of money can put inside you."

"Yes, I s'pose so," corroborated Lettie, politely but with evident reservations. "Say, Penzie, wouldn't Mr. Wopple beat you stiff? He wished me a Merry Christmas."

Mrs. Penfield laughed. "Land, Lettie, what do you think folks are—hard-and-fast little sticks of wood? They mostly ain't nothing 't all except what you think they are. Chances are, if you think a feller is mean, you're just confessing the way you acted to him first."

"My patience!" sighed Lettie. "Life is awful hard to get used to."

"Well, by George!" broke in Crink. "I'm glad this here Christmas ain't over yet. There's still them roast ducks to be et tomorrow."

### CHAPTER XIX

#### Twenty Minutes Late.

"My goodness, Uncle Jerry, you don't mean it!" Mrs. Penfield paused in her chopping of meat for the dressing.

"Yes, Carline, I came in to tell you. I'm awful sorry, but—"

"But Christmas day!" she interrupted, struggling between hurt and bewilderment. "Not to take dinner with your own folks!"

"I would if I could. Wouldn't nothing please me better. But I got to go out of town. It's a sudden call. Bustiness I got to see to! I may not be

back for several days. Don't expect me till I come. I've got to hurry for my train. Good-by. Merry Christmas!"

Gloomily Mrs. Penfield stared after him. She still had no idea what sort of business he was trying out, as he expressed it; certainly she could not understand why any business whatever should call him out of town on the chief holiday of the whole year.

The zest of the dinner was gone for her, but she exerted herself, that the children might not notice. And they did not. Never before had they had so wonderful a feast. They would live on the memory of it for many days—rather more literally than anyone supposed at the time, too. Roast ducks and potato, gravy, squash, rice pudding with raisins! And all the time the tree waited for them to come back, beckoning to them with its soft, tinsel-boughs and gay festoons of popcorn and shells.

Lettie, slightly numb from repletion, hunched down on her table-box and fixed her black eyes solemnly on Mrs. Penfield's face.

"What're you thinking of, dear? Aren't you full?"

"Full!" Lettie left it at that, with entire adequacy. "What I was thinking of was last year and the swell feed I got. I had some moldy bread and a piece of bologna that I fished out—"

"Oh, Lettie, Lettie!" broke in Mrs. Penfield compassionately. "I'll never be thankful enough that Crink found you."

"Neither'll I be, you bet your front

doormat! Jiminy, it's great to live grand like this."

The next morning the sky was full of clouds. It was degrees colder, and the wind sent the ragged leaves of the pepper tree swirling around the driveway. Mrs. Penfield reflected that it was fortunate she had just laid in a supply of coal. Cornstarch and driftwood might serve as kindlings, but they made little impression on heating the house and that generous portion of out-of-doors which swept in through cracks and knot-holes.

It was a week of rain. Clothes could not be dried in the yard, so Crink carried them up to the loft as in the previous winter, except that the ascent was easier because of Uncle Jerry's stepladder. Certainly washings could not wait for fair weather, because immediate revenue was required. Crink had asked for a week's pay in advance, to finish the payment on the coal; therefore the family were dependent on the current income. Mrs. Penfield had never planned so closely before, but it had seemed safe.

The first time that Crink returned without the money for the laundry which he had just delivered, she was disappointed; the second time, she was alarmed. In each case the family had gone out of town to spend the holiday week; Crink had encountered a maid who informed him carelessly that he would get his pay the following week.

"Now, children, we just got to plan," said Mrs. Penfield, cheerfully.

Consequently they planned. Mrs. Penfield took no further account of possible income during the week, and apportioned the supplies on hand to tide them through till the day after New Year's. She was reasonably sure that on that date she could depend upon a payment from Mrs. Weatherstone.

## Hog Prices Were Very Low in 1922

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Sale prices of pure bred hogs reached a very low level in 1922, according to a recent survey made by the United States Department of Agriculture. Analysis of the reports on the sale of 30,382 pure bred hogs in 1922 indicates that the pure bred swine business has suffered depression along with other branches of agriculture. The reports received present a fairly accurate picture of the business, in the opinion of department officials, although they do not represent a large number of animals.

## Pure Bred Swine Business Suffered Depression With Other Farm Branches.

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## Number and Price of Hogs.

The number of hogs of the five breeds on which reports were received are: Berkshire, 1,762; Chester White, 8,922; Duroc Jersey, 8,556; Hampshire, 4,910; and Poland China, 6,232. The average price received for each breed, including all ages and both sexes at both private and auction sales was: Berkshire, \$30.57; Chester White, \$42.72; Duroc Jersey, \$45.91; Hampshire, \$44.42; and Poland China, \$41.94. Auction sale averages were from \$10 to \$25 above those sold at private treaty. This difference, it is pointed out, is due partly to the large number of pigs under eight months of age sold privately, whereas auction sales are usually confined largely to more mature animals and involve a larger number of bred gilts, service boars and bred sows.

## Highest Prices by Breeds.

Sales reported at less than \$7.50 per head were omitted in calculating the averages, as sales at such low figures were not considered to be legitimate pure bred sales. The highest prices by breeds indicated by the reports were: Chester White, \$740; Poland China, \$500; Hampshire, \$500; Duroc Jersey, \$550; and Berkshire, \$250.

Of the 30,382 hogs reported upon, 421 brought \$150 or more. These were distributed by breeds as follows: Berkshire, 19; Chester White, 153; Duroc Jersey, 130; Hampshire, 47; Poland China, 67. A few bred sows and gilts sold above \$150, but the average price was about \$50.

This survey is a new feature of the new service work of the bureau of agricultural economics, of the department, and is the first of a series of surveys to be made at intervals of six months.

## Control Measures for Flag Smut of Wheat

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

## Several Ways Outlined for Holding Disease in Check.

Flag smut of wheat, a disease that has been known by its presence throughout the world for many years, was first discovered in the United States in some fields of wheat in Illinois in 1919. Although the disease has not caused much loss in the infested area, the area is gradually enlarging and indications are that it may become a serious disease unless adequate control measures are put into effect. The symptoms of flag smut and suggested control measures are discussed in Department Circular 273, just issued by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Flag smut appears as black stripes running lengthwise in the leaf and sheaths of the wheat plant which become twisted and rarely produce a head. Infected plants are usually more or less dwarfed. The disease may be held in check and reduced in quantity by judicious quarantine measures, seed treatment, crop rotation and other sanitary measures, and by growing resistant varieties of wheat through experiments a number of varieties have been found which are highly resistant to or possibly even immune from the disease. It is possible that by the use of such varieties, kept free from susceptible mixtures, the disease may be entirely eradicated.

Those interested may secure a copy of this circular free of charge, as long as the supply lasts, from the Department of Agriculture, Washington.

## Sweet Clover Is Best of Different Honey Plants

Score another for sweet clover which not so long ago was regarded as a noxious roadside weed. Sweet clover is the greatest honey plant in the United States, according to G. C. Matthews, of Illinois university's division of bee culture, who points out that the several varieties of the plant furnish successive bee pasture from spring until frosts in the fall.

"The yellow biennial comes along about the time dandelions go out of bloom," says Mr. Matthews, "and so tides bees over the critical period just before the blooming of white clover. The white biennial blooms after white clover and lasts well into August. Hubam, the white annual, begins to bloom soon after the first of August and continues until killed by frost. The beekeeper can keep a constant honey flow in his community if he can but persuade the farmers around to grow all three varieties of sweet clover."

## Rye Is Most Excellent Crop to Pasture Swine

Rye probably is the best crop to use for fall, winter and spring pasture for hogs. By putting in successive plantings from two to four weeks apart it is possible to have fresh pasture all the time. Seeding for pasture should be much heavier than for a grain crop—from three to four bushels an acre on good soil. Pasturing probably can begin six weeks after seeding, and may continue, if the rye is not covered with snow, until the following April.

Hog raisers can "kill two birds with one stone" by plowing under barn lots and putting in such crops as rye. In the first place, hogs need good succulent pasture as much of the time as possible, and in the second place they need protection against internal parasites, such as roundworms, the eggs of which remain in the soil. Turning over the soil in the lots helps to get rid of the pests, and the crop of forage makes it a profitable operation. In addition to providing cheap protein feed, pasture crops aid as laxative and require the hogs to take a certain amount of exercise which is necessary to breeding animals and growing pigs.

## Cure for Blackhead Has Never Been Discovered

The United States Department of Agriculture has this to say concerning blackhead: "No positive cure for blackhead has been found. As in the case of all other infectious diseases, the sick bird should immediately be removed from the flock to prevent a further spread of the disease, and if very sick it is best to kill it and burn the body. Clean out the roosting place and spread lime in the places most frequented by the turkeys. Keep a disinfectant in the drinking water; potassium permanganate is most often used, a sufficient quantity of the crystals being added to the water to give it a wine color, which for every gallon of water will take about as much of the chemical as can be placed on a dime. If the turkeys are being fed heavily, their ration should be reduced, as overfeeding predisposes to the disease. The feeding of sour milk has been found to be of advantage in keeping turkeys in good health and in reducing the activities of the organisms causing blackhead."

## Saving Can Be Made on Feeds Bought in Autumn

Dairymen who must have milk feeds for their herds next winter should buy them now and thus save on costs, says E. A. Hanson, dairy extension specialist, University of Minnesota. "The practice of purchasing a few sacks of bran or oilmeal whenever needed, is poor economy," says Mr. Hanson. "The cost of feed is a large factor influencing the profits, and a good saving can be made on ton purchases of oilmeal or cotton-seed meal at this time rather than waiting until the winter months are here."

## Proper Amount of Salt to Give Producing Cow

The cow producing an average amount of milk, requires at least an ounce of salt a day. A safe rule to follow is to allow three-fourths of an ounce daily for each 1,000 pounds of live-weight and an additional three-fourths of an ounce for each ten pounds of milk produced. Missouri College of Agriculture dairymen follow this rule.

## In Cooling Milk Entire Mass Must Be Stirred

In cooling milk it isn't sufficient to just set the can of milk in a tub of cold water. The milk must be stirred thoroughly until the entire mass of milk is about the temperature of the water. When the milk is not stirred, the milk in the center of the can is not affected by the cold water until the bacteria have had an opportunity to increase greatly in numbers and as a result the whole mass of milk sours. The milk in contact with the container will be cooled, but that isn't sufficient.

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### BASIS OF SOUND PHILOSOPHY

Irish Laborer's Advice Concerning Commissioner's Worries Worth Taking to Heart.

Charles H. Spear, head of the harbor commission of San Francisco, says that on first taking that office years ago an Irish laborer hailed him on the Embarcadero with a "Good-mornin', Mr. Prisdint. How are ye the mar-in'?"

"Never better," said Spear, "and how about you?"

"Ol'm feelin' jist the same way. We're all livin' us workin' for ye, an' workin' fer the state, as hard as I ever ought to, considerin'. Ol' hope ye'll have a good administration. An' let me make yez one liv these here siggitions. San Francisco bay is a foine body o' wather. Whin thin's don't go right along the front an' yer soul gits all full o' trouble about it, don't let it wrinkle yer face nor kape yez awake noights. Remember that that bay was here a long time before you come an' it'll be here a long time after ye're gone."

### Switchmen Needed.

Many a golden opportunity has been wrecked for want of a genius to throw the switch.

### Every table should have its Daily Portion of Grape-Nuts

"There's a Reason"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## The Plighted Word.

The heaviest fetter that ever weighed down the limbs of a captive is as the web of the gossamer compared with the pledge of people of honor. The wall of stone and the bar of iron may be broken, but the plighted word, never.