

The Custard Cup

CHAPTER XIX.—Continued.

By Florence Bingham Livingston
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The day dragged through—and the night. The next morning, as early as permissible, Crink set out for relief, and brought back an enormous bundle from Mrs. Weatherstone's, as well as the pay for the two weeks. And the lunch that day far outdistanced the Christmas dinner in acceptability to all the little Penfields.

When Mrs. Penfield opened the bundle that Crink had brought, she was amazed to find that it did not contain white clothing as usual, but silks and embroideries, colored fabrics, a far more difficult washing. However, she undertook it the following morning, the more readily because it was cloudy, with a slight wind. The delicate articles could be hung in the yard and would dry quickly.

The rents must be collected, since all the tenants who had been away for the holidays were now home again. Mrs. Penfield flew from one thing to another—washing, collecting rent, watching the silk curtains and embroideries on the line, changing them about that they might dry as quickly and evenly as possible. She must get to the bank before closing time.

In the midst of all this bustle, Gusie Bosley came in, bringing a small square package.

"Don't say you won't take it." She forestalled Mrs. Penfield's objection. "I've just got to leave it with you."

"I can't take it," said Mrs. Penfield firmly. "It makes me uneasy. You'd better rent a safety box. Ain't anything safe here if a burglar should take a notion to come. I'm sorry, but I don't feel like taking—"

"You needn't take it," interrupted Gusie Bosley. With a lightning movement, she reached through the open bedroom door and placed the package on the apple-box cupboard. "The responsibility's on my head. Thank you." She ran out of the house, well ahead of Mrs. Penfield, who followed, protesting, as soon as she had snatched up the package.

Displeased but conquered, she took the package back and dropped it in her old suitcase. She was in far too great a hurry to do anything else at the moment. It crossed her mind that Mrs. Bosley's nerves must be going back on her; but in that case, the safety box was the logical solution.

She hurried to the yard and quickly gathered the silken articles from the lines. She could not go downtown and leave them outside, even with the children watching them. As she came back, she glanced to see what time it was—caught her breath in dismay. The bank was closed!

Aghast, she stared blankly at the old alarm clock. It was never simple to read the discolored dial under the cracked glass, particularly because a leg was gone, and one had to turn one's head, mentally or actually, to compensate for the tilting. Otherwise, one might fall into error from long habit with normal clocks.

"How did I ever make such a blunder?" she gasped. "I'm twenty minutes behind, and I didn't know it. I must have read wrong when I looked last time. My goodness land, now I've got all that money in the house. Likely a few Bosley valuables more or less don't make so much difference as I thought."

A little later that same afternoon Bonnie Geraldine was secured by a shop-twine leash fastened around one leg and given an airing in the driveway. If Fil Caesar needed exercise,

so surprised that she forgot everything else, staring, open-mouthed, till the limousine stopped beside her.

The big car contained only one person, a lady in a dark-blue suit and a small hat cunningly formed of dark-blue wings. She was tall and slender, with delicate features and creamy skin. She wore a sable scarf; she carried a sable muff. Most evidently she was in a hurry. Before the chauffeur could spring from his seat, she had opened the door of the car and started to descend.

Lettie roused. "Hold on!" she cried in alarm. "Wait till I get Bonnie Geraldine out of the way."

With one daintily shod foot on the running board, the lady paused. She swayed slightly. Her hurry seemed to desert her.

"What?" she gasped. "What—who—"

"Bonnie Geraldine," repeated Lettie. "Wait till I wind up her rope and kind o' pull her in. If you was to trip in it, you might throw her."

The lady's beautiful dark eyes followed the length of shop-twine to the bunch of speckled feathers, now considerably agitated by the general commotion and also by Lettie's zealous reefing in.

"Do you call that—that hen—Bonnie Geraldine?"

"Uh-huh," beamed Lettie, flattered by this attention to her pet. "Ain't it a grand name? I took it from two swell girls. She's going to be a society hen when she grows up."

The lady appeared to be having trouble about breathing. Her gloved hand fluttered at her throat, loosed the sable scarf. She stepped to the ground. "Don't you think you might call your hen something more—more appropriate?" she inquired, with greater composure.

Lettie shook her head violently. "Suits me. They're the swellest folks I know, and—"

"Oh, then you know these people?"

Lettie tossed her head in disdain at this literalness. "I hain't seen 'em, if that's what you mean; but golly, I've seen their clothes. Swellest clothes ever saw. I have to hang 'round the yard and watch 'em when they're drying, 'cause somebody might snatch 'em; and if they should—Landy great Goshens, it'd bust The Custard Cup to pay for 'em."

The lady's interest had waned. She was looking fixedly at the child's ragged blue chambray. Lettie, with lightning reaction, resented the scrutiny.

"What's the matter with this here rig?" she asked feelingly.

"Its familiarity," murmured the lady. "The same and yet not the same! Will you tell me where Mrs. Penfield lives?"

Lettie, now cuddling the caw-cawing Bonnie Geraldine in her thin arms, sprang forward, her great black eyes shining with excitement.

"Jinny, do you mean it? Are you really coming to see us? Great guns, ain't that the darndest good luck! Everybody 'round'll be jealous when they see what a caller we roped in. Follow me!"

With an air of importance as expansive as a drum major's, Lettie darted in front of the limousine lady and led the way toward Number 47. But at the entrance to the alley they ran into a youngster with auburn hair and big blue eyes that opened wide and wider in delighted amazement. He was wearing the pink plaid which had been made down from a garment once worn by Miss Bonnie Weatherstone.

The lady stopped short. "Who—who is this?"

"It's Thad," elucidated Lettie, somewhat impatient over this superfluous detail. "He's my little brother—or he would be if he was any related at all. Here, Thad, take Bonnie Geraldine 'round to her coop and be sure and fasten the slats. She's a precious hen, so you look lively or you'll have me to reckon with. Now—" As she slid the big door on its creaking wheels, she turned her attention again to the caller—"you hain't told me who you are. I gotta tell Penzie."

"Oh, yes. Tell her, Mrs. Weatherstone."

Lettie paused with the door half open. "Holy smoke!" she gasped. "You don't mean it! Land, I'm glad to see you at last. Come right along in, and set anywhere you like. That there chair's the best one, though, if you ask me. I'll speak to Penzie."

She darted into the kitchen, closing the door behind her with great forethought. She returned immediately. "Penzie'll be in right away," she reported. "She's ironing some'n and can't stop in the middle. Just make yourself to home."

Launching this formal hospitality with only the vaguest idea of its significance, she was contented when Mrs. Weatherstone merely continued to sit.

Lettie made conversation. "How's your health, Mrs. Weatherstone?"

The lady's lips danced, but she answered as a lady should. "I'm very well, thank you. How are you?"

"Oh, me!" returned Lettie jauntily. "I'm as strong as a cow. I've made as many's twenty trips today, I guess."

Mrs. Weatherstone seemed not to be familiar with the phraseology of dumps. Her dark eyes strayed to a packing box.

"Are you moving?" she inquired, in some perplexity.

"Land, no," cried Lettie in astonishment. "Them—why them? are beds. Look here!" She sprang up and gave one of the boxes a vigorous twist. "This is where Crink sleeps; Thad sleeps in the other one."

"Never mind, Lettie," reproved Mrs. Penfield quietly, as she came into the room. "I'm very sorry to have kept you waiting, Mrs. Weatherstone."

Subdued, Lettie pushed back the box and withdrew to a corner, watching her beloved Penzie with speculative wonder. There was a subtle change in Mrs. Penfield's manner, even in her way of speaking. Lettie felt it, but could not know the cause. Without realizing it herself, Mrs. Penfield had reverted to the days when she had had a real home and had received callers on a basis of genial equality, vastly different from her enforced experience in The Custard Cup, an environment which was far from encouraging to niceties in speech and bearing. Her manner was as self-possessed as usual, but touched with a gracious reserve that would have been fatal in her intercourse



Mrs. Weatherstone Sprang to Her Feet.

with tenants who assumed superiority lest someone treat them as inferior. Mrs. Weatherstone, being a cultured woman, was undisturbed by thoughts of comparison. Therefore Mrs. Penfield could meet her on her own ground.

Mrs. Weatherstone proceeded at once to her errand. "I have just discovered that one of the maids gave your son the wrong bundle. I suppose you knew it was a mistake."

"A mistake!" Mrs. Penfield repeated the phrase in surprise. "No, I didn't know there was a mistake."

"You didn't? Why, didn't you get the silk hangings and that embroidered bedspread?"

"Yes, but I s'posed you intended to send 'em."

A look of alarm came into Mrs. Weatherstone's face. "What did you do with them?" Her voice was tense with suppressed anxiety.

"I washed them. Right now I was ironing—"

Mrs. Weatherstone sprang to her feet. "You washed them!" she repeated, shocked and incredulous. "Do you mean that you put them into water?"

Mrs. Penfield blinked. "Sure I did, why not?"

"Into water! My choicest hangings! How could you do it? You should have known there was a mistake. Those things were to be dry cleaned. I'd gathered up everything because we're doing the house over and re-furnishing. But water! Why—"

"What's the matter with water?" demanded Mrs. Penfield, thoughtfully puzzled. "Dry cleaning ain't half so cleansing, and things don't smell so good, either."

"I know that, but it's a slight matter compared with ruining—"

"Ruining! Do you s'pose for a minute, Mrs. Weatherstone, that I ruined your hangings and— Why, I shouldn't have touched 'em if I hadn't been sure what I could do. They're looking fine."

Mrs. Weatherstone's shoulders relaxed; the tension in her bearing blended into her usual grace. "What do you mean?" she asked weakly.

"I'll show you, but you'll have to come into the kitchen." She led the way and pointed to a spread, thrown across a line. It was of cashmere satin, woven in India and embroidered with delicate silks in a raised pattern. Hundreds and hundreds of stitches had gone into every square inch.

"Hand-made dyes," said Mrs. Penfield casually. "They don't use any others for that kind of work."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Thought for the Day.
One reason some people do not feel good is because they do not do good.

Farmers' Opinions on Stock Feeding

Obtaining Feed Economically Is Most Troublesome Problem of Breeders.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Producing or otherwise obtaining their feed economically is the most troublesome feeding problem of farmers who keep live stock. This was brought out emphatically through a questionnaire sent out by the United States Department of Agriculture which was answered by nearly 500 farmers scattered over the country. The replies showed that general economy of rations, the cost of grain, and the cost of protein represent about 52 per cent of the difficulties in feeding.

These men classed balancing of rations next in importance. Other problems, such as labor, increasing production, difficulties in wintering stock, short pastures, and variety and palatability of feeds apparently were thought of only in connection with the principal difficulties. That these opinions are worth considering is borne out by the fact that all of the men questioned were progressive farmers and breeders, and the average period of their experience was 20 years.

Adopt Balanced Rations.
During the two decades these stock raisers have been working to get ahead, many changes have taken place in the ways of feeding animals. The outstanding progressive step taken has been the wide adopting of the balanced ration. Other improvements in the order given by most of the five hundred farmers are more liberal feeding, feeding more legumes, better water supply, providing minerals, feeding according to production, feeding more protein, and more regular feeding.

At the same time they list the common errors in feeding which are responsible for poor results, poor combinations of feeds being the one most frequently mentioned, followed by underfeeding as the next most effective reducer of profits. Following these in regular order, based on the number of times mentioned in the answers, come lack of protein, lack of water, lack of legumes, sudden changes of feed, poor housing parasites, lack of salt, waste of feed, poor equipment, and overfeeding. Practically all of these troubles are easily preventable.

Almost all of these 500 farmers had raised at one time or another scrubs, grades, and pure breeds, and almost to a man they joined in a paean of praise of the pure bred. Only 1 per cent of them reported that they had failed with improved stock. Most replies contained specific estimates showing the superiority of well-bred over random-bred animals, and when averaged it was brought out that these men consider that pure breeds make about 40 per cent better returns on feed used than common stock. It is interesting to note here that another questionnaire sent out by the department a year ago and answered by several hundred farmers showed that in their opinion pure breeds have a general utility value a little more than 40 per cent greater than common stock.

Many Use Self-Feeders.
The report prepared by the department on the results of this feeding investigation contains many more interesting sidelights on feeding, and corroborates a number of tendencies that good observers must have suspected. For instance, of 400 who answered questions regarding the use of self-feeders, 41.5 per cent had used this method of feeding, leaving about three-fifths yet to take up this economy. At present the self-feeder seems to be used mostly in hog raising districts and for poultry. In the Middle West more than half the farmers reporting used it. The general sentiment seems to be that this piece of equipment is especially suited to hogs and chickens, but a few farmers used it for feeding calves and sheep.

Nearly all of those who replied made comment on the feeding of silage, and practically 50 per cent of them use this feed. In the north-eastern states, where dairying is very generally followed, two-thirds of the farmers in the list have silos. Although most of the silage is fed to dairy cows, the list of animals to which it is fed, according to the questionnaire, includes also steers, breeding ewes, and brood sows. A few men reported feeding it in limited quantities to horses, hogs, and lambs.

It is worth while to note that more than 22 per cent of these farmers who answered the government questionnaire credited farm papers as the principal source of their knowledge of feeding problems. Other important sources mentioned were: Experience on home farm, general observation, bulletins, and books and records.

Darken Colt's Stall to Lessen Fly Irritation

Leave the colts in the barn while their mother is working in the field. Darken the colts' stalls to lessen the irritation from flies and give them access to clean feed at all times. This will give them a chance to develop and grow into much better individuals.

Profitable to Cull Flocks.
It is just as profitable to keep the farm flock culled for wool and mutton as for eggs and white meat.

Mark of Good Layer.
Late molting is the mark of a good producer.

Worm Causes Heavier Losses Than Cholera

Biggest Part of the Damage Comes From Wasted Feed.

Swine raisers suffer greater loss from round worms than from hog cholera, according to the department of animal husbandry of the New Jersey agricultural experiment station, but they do not attract so much attention because few hogs actually die from worms. The damage comes from the amount of feed wasted in feeding the worms and the loss of vitality of the animals. Many lung diseases, especially pneumonia, occur as the direct result of worms.

To combat the round worm successfully its life cycle should be thoroughly understood. Six to eight million eggs a year are laid by the female worm in the hog's intestines. The eggs come out with the manure, infecting every particle of food on the surface of the hog lot. They will survive most conditions for at least a year.

The eggs are swallowed by the pig in feeding and hatch in the intestines. The young worms then work their way through the walls of the intestines, and into the liver and blood stream, by which they are carried to the lungs. While in the lungs they may cause "thumps" or heavy breathing. Here they become active, crawl up the windpipe and cause coughing. Some are expelled from the mouth at this time, but most are swallowed and then remain permanently in the intestines.

Several treatments for worms may be followed:

Withhold feed from the hog for 24 hours and give a capsule containing two grains of santonin, three grains of aloin and eight grains of sodium bicarbonate. Do not feed for eight or ten hours after treatment, and then give one to two tablespoonfuls of epsom salts or glauber salts in the feed for every 100 pounds live weight of the hogs. One capsule is sufficient for a pig weighing up to 75 pounds.

If santonin cannot be procured, oil chenopodium, also known as "oil of worm seed" may be used. Four teaspoonfuls mixed with one ounce of castor oil is the usual dosage. The results will be most satisfactory if the oil is given alone rather than with the feed. Each pig should be fasted 24 hours before treatment.

If necessary, repeat the treatment in four to six weeks.

Late Built Houses May Cause Colds and Roup

Many poultrymen are finding that poultry houses built too late in the fall are apt to result in colds and roup.

Before the birds, especially pullets, are put in a new poultry house the floor as well as the lumber used in construction must be thoroughly dry. The essentials of a good poultry house are, dryness, as this prevents colds and roup; fresh air, which keeps the birds in good health; sunlight, nature's best disinfectant, and floor space so that during confinement the birds will have room to exercise.

For the best results a poultry house should be built for units of 200 birds. This requires a house 20 by 40 feet. It should face southward and should be located on high dry ground, and where it gets some shelter. Glass windows on the east and west sides with curtain windows in the front will allow all the sunlight and fresh air that the birds require.

Protection of the flock against daily and seasonal changes of weather and climate is the purpose of a poultry house.

High Feeding Value of Buttermilk and Products

The feeding value of buttermilk and buttermilk products, such as condensed or dried buttermilk, is not generally appreciated. At any rate, creameries are unable to get as much out of their buttermilk as its feeding value indicates they should be able to realize. Farmers who live close to the creamery at which they sell their cream sometimes take their own share of the buttermilk back home as a feed for hogs and chickens. They derive much value from the product, provided it is fed in an economical manner. Buttermilk is relatively rich in protein and its protein has a high feeding value because of its animal origin. For that reason, if it is supplied more liberally than it is needed for balancing the grain ration fed, part of it is wasted and, as a result, its full feeding value is not realized.

Pure Strain Selections of Tubers Are Superior

Cornell university plant breeders have found that pure-strain selections of potatoes are much superior to those ordinarily grown by farmers in New York. Plants of the pure strain, developed from a single tuber, produced 48 more bushels to the acre than seed potatoes selected by farmers in a two-year commercial test.

Disposing of Produce to Commission Merchant

Selling to commission merchants is the simplest method of disposing of the produce as it does away with the expense and trouble involved in a private trade, but the returns are usually not so great, except when dealing with certain commission houses that have built up a fine trade along certain lines.

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