



CHAPTER VIII—Continued

This, like the bedroom, was paneled, and there, sure enough, a key was declaring a cupboard sunk in the wall.

I saw the bolts of a trap which was sunk in the floor of the cupboard six feet from the door.

In an instant I had it open, there was a curling staircase of polished oak and Helena, wrapped in a dressing gown, sitting on one of the stairs.

She pointed to a table, standing close to the hearth, laid for one only, but bearing enough for three.

"Open the wine, my darling. I'll cut the chicken up."

"We mustn't eat much," I whispered. "If we do, they'll know I've been here."

"Let them know," said Helena, quickly. "What do I care? What does it matter, John? What does anything matter now?"

"I shook my head. 'This matters, Nell. Compared with this, the forester's cottage and all was a Sunday School show. Don't think I'm prudish. I'm not. I'm only too glad of a good excuse to be here. You see, I'm a man, and I love you—from throat to foot. But no one must ever know it. If we stood on the steps of a scaffold, I'd say the same.'

"I saw her fingers tighten about the stem of her glass. 'You're right,' she said. 'I'm getting my values wrong. Never

"Keep Valentine with you. Use any violence you like. He must not return to the castle, and no one on earth must know that he is with you. Don't fail me."

"But why write to Geoffrey, Nell? I could tell Barley to tell him, and—"

"No, no. You don't understand. It's too serious for that. I don't think you know what I've done in abducting the Count. You must give this note to your cousin—into his hands."

"But, Nell, that's out of the question. Geoffrey won't be back till seven o'clock."

"What does that matter, John? We're free till noon." She stuffed the sheet into its envelope and thrust this again upon me. "Take it, I beg and pray you, and give it into his hand. You talk of my reputation, in this affair far more than my name is at stake. If they knew what I'd done, my own servants would use me as a leper; they all took the oath that I took, and it's never been broken, John, since Yorick was built. I had to do it, John—you know that I had; but if anyone ever finds out, there's an end of me."

"Pharaoh knows, my darling." "What can he prove? Nothing. But if Valentine and he get together, I haven't a chance. And Pharaoh would be on to Mona within the hour."

"All right," I said. "I'll take it. But—"

"Thank God, my darling." She threw herself into my arms. "Now I do know that you love me. Don't think I don't know what I'm asking."

She brushed my cheek with her lips and threw back her head. "Ask what you like of me after—I'll give it with all my heart. We'll live or die together—just as you say. But we're going to live—I know it. We're going to come out of this pass. But I mustn't be stained, my darling—I don't want your wife to be stained with a blemish that won't come off."

"God help me," said I. "I'll do it. But why I must stand and watch while he reads your note—"

"To bring me back his promise. Until I know that he's read it, I shan't know a moment's peace. Oh, John, my dear, I've got so much to carry."

"Very well, my beauty. I'll go at once."

"I hastened back to my bedroom and dressed as fast as I could. Gingerly feeling my wound, I remembered Helena's promise to send a horse for me to the mouth of the entrance drive. She had, of course, no idea that Dewdrop had stabbed me so deep. Perhaps if I stood in my stirrups—"

Before I left the chamber, I drew the bolts of the door. Then I took Sabre and made for the polished stair.

Twenty minutes later I fought my way out of the bushes that were masking the tunnel's mouth.

Something at least I was spared, for Geoffrey drove up to the inn five minutes before his time.

"Well, I'm damned," he said. "And where the deuce have you been?"

"I'll tell you later," said I, and put the note into his hand. "And now come out of that car. I've got to get back."

"Get back where?" said Geoffrey. "I'll tell you later," said I. "You read that note."

My cousin stared. Then he drew out the sheet of paper and read the message it bore. When he had done, he looked me full in the eye.

"You shouldn't have opened it, should you?"

"As a matter of fact, I didn't. She sealed it before I came down—in. Then she broke it open and read it to me herself."

Geoffrey fingered his chin. "Well, you can't go like this," he said, getting out of the car. "I mean—"

"Geoffrey," I said, "believe me, I must get back. I'll get into touch again as soon as ever I can, but, however strange you find it, I can't wait now."

"Only one moment," said Geoffrey, taking my arm.

Despite my protests he halted me up the steps and into the inn.

In the hall I planted my feet. "Look here, Geoffrey," I said. "I don't want to have a row, but I've got to get back to her without one instant's delay. I wouldn't have dreamed of coming, but she couldn't send a servant and—well, there was no other way. I'd have left the note with Barley, but she wouldn't have that. She's got to know that you've got it, and have promised to do as she says."

"Oh, well, here goes," said Geoffrey, and hit me under the jaw as hard as he could.

CHAPTER IX

The Fragrant Valley

WHEN I came to my senses, I was lying on the floor of a car that was traveling fast. My wrists and my ankles were bound and my mouth was gagged. Barley was seated above me watching my face.

As I tried to sit up, he pushed me back on the pillows which made my bed.

"Lie quiet a bit, sir," he said. "and you'll soon be as right as rain."

To this day I do not know why I did not get out of my mind.

They say that I fought like a madman, but that was because I was mad. Barley had to throw himself on me, to keep me down. And then at last I fainted.

I do not think Barley knew it, for my senses had hardly left me before they returned; but I think that discretion came with them, for then I saw that to struggle and fight was hopeless. And so, to feign resignation, I lay quite still where I was and shut my eyes. And that was my undoing, for after a moment or two I fell asleep.

Though the car fled on, I knew nothing, and I never knew when it stopped. I was lifted out, still sleeping, and though my bonds were loosened, I never stirred.

And while I slept, Lady Helena Yorick was playing her part.

The song of a brook woke me, and I propped myself on an elbow to gather my wits.

The next instant I was afoot and was staring wildly about me. . . . The wooded peak of a mountain looked placidly back—and a pride of beeches was smiling and a chapter of gray-green rocks was casting its stately shadow upon the most vivid of swards.

It was half-past four. I had slept for more than nine hours.

The dial of my watch grew misty. I felt the tears beginning to leave my eyes. One of them fell upon the dial. So I stood for a moment.

Then I flung myself down and buried my face in the grass.

"Come, come, old fellow," said Geoffrey, "you mustn't take it so ill."

I made no answer. I dared not trust my voice.

"You'd have done the same," said my cousin. "John, I couldn't ignore such a hint."

I sat up and dashed the tears from my face.

"Hint? What hint?" Geoffrey raised his eyebrows.

"I don't know what she read you," he said. "But I don't think she read you that."

As he spoke, he gave me a paper—Helena's note.

Mr. Bohun: Keep John with you. Use any violence you like. He must not return to the castle and no one on earth must know that he is with you. Don't fail me. Helena Yorick.

"No," I said, "you're quite right. She didn't read that." I laughed shortly. "You'd have seen through

it, of course; nine out of ten people would. But you must remember that I'm no ordinary fool. Besides, I trusted her blindly—trusted and loved her blindly. So you see it was awfully easy to have me on." I laughed again. "It's rather like fooling a dog or a baby child. A dog, I think. Your dog. You've decided to have him destroyed, so you take him for a walk and stop at the vet's. He doesn't know. He doesn't care where you go, so long as he can go with you—be with his god. He loves you blindly, you see. He's not the faintest idea that you're going to do him in. You can speak to the vet. In his presence—I want this dog destroyed. You're perfectly safe. He'll lick your hand while you're speaking, if only you'll give him the chance. . . . But—if—that—dog's—eyes—were opened. . . . If when you were gone and he was standing, waiting, with his eager nose to the threshold, straining his ears for some signal of your return—if then by some magic that dog was made aware of the truth. . . ."

"Now, look here, old fellow," said Geoffrey, "I'm not going to take any sides till I know where I am. I want to hear your story from first to last. Don't leave out any details. This show's bung full of details, and details count."

I plucked at the grass. "I don't know that I care to tell you."

"Take your time," said Geoffrey. "But we don't leave here till you do."

"I don't know that I want to leave here."

"No more do I," said Geoffrey. "It's a very attractive spot, and I'm glad of a change."

I lay back and stared at the sky. I felt a curious detachment from all that ten hours ago had been my life. Looking back, I seemed to be looking across some unbridgeable depth.

I think the truth is that my interest in Helena Yorick had suddenly died, and since that had filled

my being, for the moment my life was empty as never before. I did not regret the lady—I was neither happy nor sad. I simply had no material upon which my emotions could work. The bitterness I had shown Geoffrey was that of a savage critic—not of an injured man. I was impersonal.

So much for the state of mind which my abrupt disillusion had brought about. Helena Yorick had deceived me. Nell had looked into my eyes and fooled me to the top of my bent. The utterly impossible had happened. The ideal I had carved out of marble had crumbled away.

There was only one thing to be done—the game must go on and from now I would play my own hand.

I sat up and looked at my cousin.

"I suppose I may as well tell you," I said.

"I suppose so," said Geoffrey, yawning.

"Where shall I start?"

"From where I left you at Villach, just over a week ago."

A full half hour went by before I had done.

"I've got to digest this," he said. "I shan't be long."

While he strolled, I lay flat once more and stared at the sky, and though I would gladly have stopped them, my thoughts rapped back to the antics which I had lately performed.

Helena Yorick had piped, and I had danced. That was as much as it came to. But I had trusted the piper, and the piper had played me false.

My cousin was standing before me, regarding his watch.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

About Buncombe

In 1820 Felix Walker was the congressional representative of the North Carolina district which included Buncombe county. During the close of a debate on the Missouri Compromise, when the house wanted to take a vote on the question, Walker insisted on making a speech declaring he was bound to make a speech for Buncombe, which expected it. Hence the expression and its abbreviation "bunk" came to mean any insincere political talk intended for the gallery, or talk that is for effect and not sincere.

Constructive Suggestions or Complaints: Which Get Results?

First Method Fosters Good Will; Second Causes Annoyance.

There are two ways of accomplishing things which one has to get done. One is to complain that things are not as they should be. The other is to make constructive suggestions and request that they be followed out. The first method is apt to annoy the person conferred with. The second appeals to his sense of justice, and, if the suggestion is a good one and within reason, it is generally heeded. Assuming that, in both cases the thing gets done, in the first instance, annoyance prevails, while in the second, good will is fostered. You will remember the old adage that you can catch more flies with molasses, than vinegar. In other words you can get more accomplished by keeping good tempered and sweet, than by getting annoyed and sour tempered.

Getting Things Accomplished.

It is well to remember these methods for family use, and for civic purposes. It does not mean that one can get things done merely by being good natured. There must be a plus to it. There must be continual effort in the right direction, until the point is won. And when there has been no hard feeling created, and the matter is seen to, there is likely to be a feeling of satisfaction on the side of both parties, each being pleased that a good thing has resulted.

It was by the recommended method that a woman succeeded in getting a bench put on a waiting station platform. She appealed to the correct authorities, telling of the genuine need for such a bench, as tired persons found it almost more than they could endure to stand from ten to twenty minutes, more or less, according to the connection of one car with another at this junction. At first, came a note stating that her request had been noted, and formally thanking her for letting them know of her wish; nothing more, and nothing was done.

A Restful Bench.

It was only after repeated appeals, and continued assertions that the company would be treating their patrons with consideration by putting

the bench at the place suggested, that finally she succeeded. And now, not only are her own trips to the city made less tiresome, but hundreds of other persons daily find the seat a blessing.

Another instance comes to mind. Repeated accidents of major and minor severity occurred at a certain city corner, by autos colliding. A woman requested the city to install STOP BEFORE CROSSING signs by the curb at each corner of the cross street. Since her request was heeded, fewer catastrophes have occurred, and there need be none, if only motorists would heed them. She did not complain, but she made a

Sailors Are More Costly to Educate Than Soldiers

It is figured by the adjutant general's office in the War department that Uncle Sam's sailors are more expensive by far than his soldiers. It costs approximately \$15,000 to educate a midshipman for four years at Annapolis, compared to about \$9,715 to school a cadet for the same period at West Point. In actual service it is estimated that it costs \$4,500 annually to maintain a naval officer and \$1,100 for an enlisted man. In the army, however, maintenance cost falls to \$4,420 for officers and \$810 for each private.—Pathfinder Magazine.

good suggestion in a good way, and won her point to the comfort of all but the reckless.

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A Grave Mistake for a Mother to Make

GIVING CHILD UNKNOWN REMEDIES WITHOUT ASKING DOCTOR FIRST

GIVING your child a medicine or remedy you don't know all about—without asking your family doctor first—is a bad risk for any mother to take.

Doctors and child authorities say health, and sometimes life itself, depends on this.

So—when you're offered a "bargain" in a remedy for your child; ask your doctor before



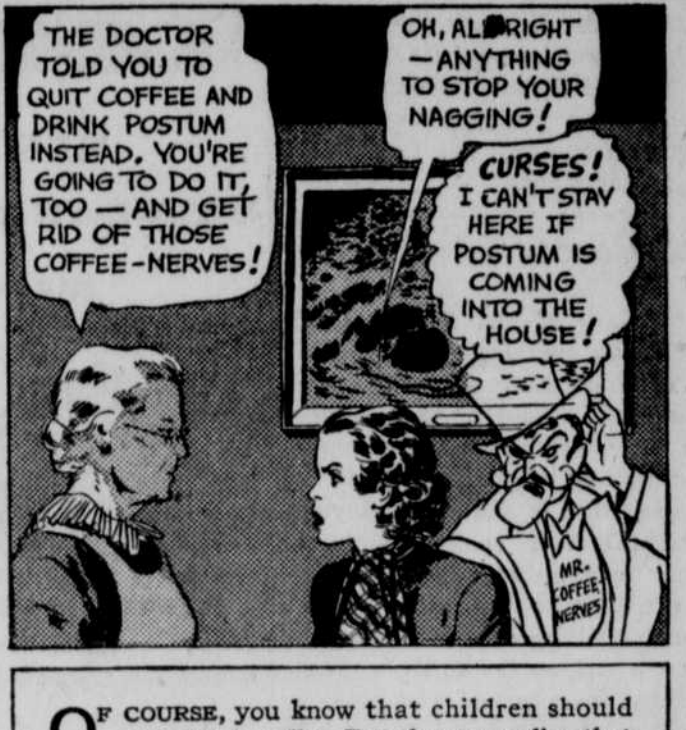
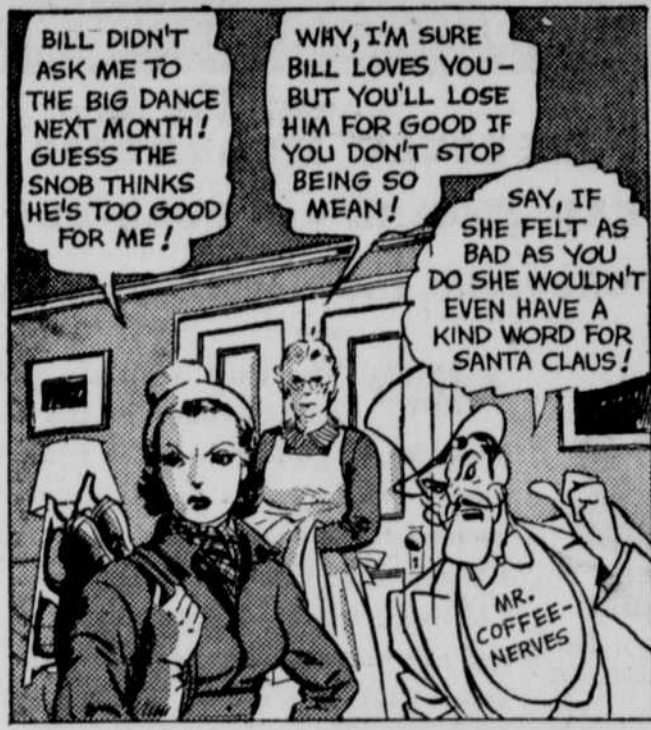
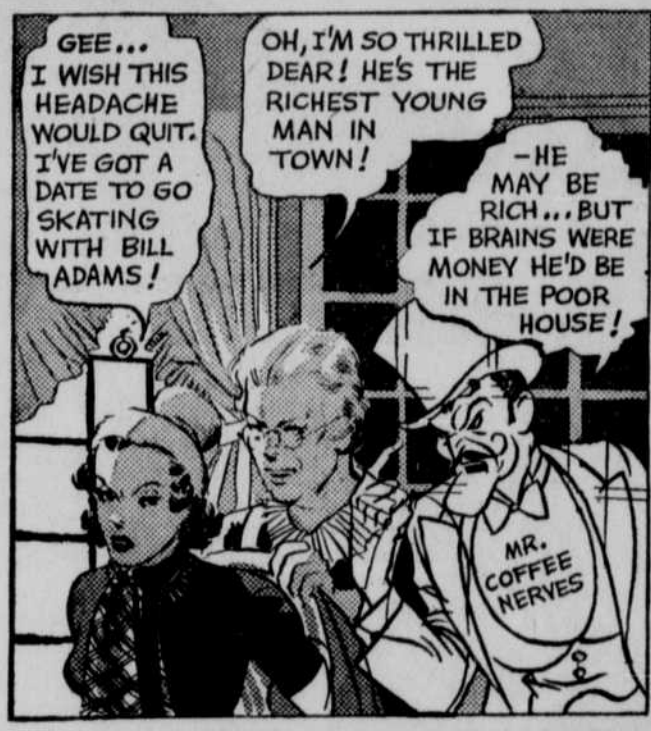
NOW, ALSO IN TABLET FORM You can assist others by refusing to accept a substitute for the genuine Phillips' Milk of Magnesia. Do this in the interest of yourself and your children—and in the interest of the public in general.

you buy it. Do this for your child's sake and your own peace of mind.

Ask him particularly about the frequently used "milk of magnesia"—about Phillips' Milk of Magnesia. He will tell you that for over 60 years physicians have endorsed it as SAFE for your child. The kind of remedy you want your child to have.

Remember this when you buy, and say "Phillips' Milk of Magnesia" to your druggist. Comes now, also, in tablets that taste of peppermint, that children like to take.

Mother Takes a Hand



OF COURSE, you know that children should never drink coffee. But do you realize that the caffeine in coffee disagrees with many grown-ups, too?

If you are bothered by headaches or indigestion, or find it difficult to sleep soundly . . . caffeine may be to blame.

Isn't it worth while to try Postum for 30 days? Postum contains no caffeine. It is simply whole wheat and bran, roasted and slightly sweetened. It is easy to make, and costs less than one-half cent a cup. It's a delicious drink, too . . . and may prove a real help. A product of General Foods.

FREE—let us send you your first week's supply of Postum free! Simply mail coupon. © 1936 G. F. Corp.

GENERAL FOODS, Battle Creek, Mich. W. N. U.—19-26 Send me, without obligation, a week's supply of Postum. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_