

ADVENTURES IN A BATHTUB!

By O. O. McINTYRE

These hectic days when most have been literally driven to I fear we are unappreciative of the virtues of the bath.

I wish to speak a good word for bathing. It is the kind of habit that grows on you and by and by you will grow so enthusiastic you can scarcely wait for Saturday night.

My first memory of the bath goes back to a little farm in Missouri. There was a tin tub, quaintly let into one side, "Narcissus." It stood in the smoke house right off the kitchen.

We filled it with buckets of water from the well. You couldn't sit down in it. You had to stand up and splash yourself. It seemed a bit of a nuisance. There was no lock on the smoke-house door and the hired girl was deaf and always running in and out.

It was not until the modern bathroom, with hot and cold water, mirrored doors and fuzzy towels, came into prominence that I ever regarded bathing as an adventure.

Now, I perfectly dote on bathing. I believe some of my happiest moments are spent in the bathtub. It is the only place I know where for no reason at all I burst into a riotous song.

His Saturday Night Voice.

Caruso used to say he was at his best in the tub. Don't misunderstand me. I have no idea I am a Caruso but I have my moments and I know if anyone could hear me singing "Love Me and The World is Mine" on Saturday night they'd be just topping.

After I have rubbed myself to a rosy glow with a Turkish towel I am also given to a little classical dancing—leaping about somewhat like Isadore Duncan when she was considered one of our very best dancers. In other words, bathing inspires me to sing and dance. And Mr. Volstead can laugh that off.

In all my experience in bathing I have had but one mishap. That was one Saturday night when I stepped into the bath and put my foot on a cake of soap. Marcelline never did a more unique fall.

I went under like a duck and one foot caught in the towel rack and the medicine chest, so-called

because there is no medicine in it, landed in the middle of my back. Since then I have always inspected the bottom of the tub. Just a slight precaution like that may save you from a little wheel chair the rest of your life.

Despite all rumors, London has a

whiskers that if ever he has his portrait painted they will label it: "Man Climbing Out of Fern Dish!"

"Well, anyway, he wouldn't let you alone. He'd stand in the bathroom, hand you the soap, the towel and even wash your back. Gets on your nerves, I'll say. There is still

liked the water and I'd tell him, luke warm. He'd fix it and then tell me it was "quite tepid." He would never admit it was luke warm. Stubborn! No end.

His name was Meadows but I called him Clinging Vine. He was always standing around and I didn't get to sing a single note all the time I was in the bloomin' country.

The most thrilling adventure I ever had in a bathtub was in a New York hotel several years ago. The door buzzer rang in the midst of my ablutions. I wrapped a towel around my Grecian figure and went dripping to answer it. I peeked out: nobody was in sight. So emboldened, I stepped out into the hall to peer around the corner to see who pressed the buzzer.

Just as I stretching my neck, there was a slam. I gulped desperately and looked around—knowing the worst had happened. The door to the room had blown shut. There was no one inside to answer and there was I and anything might happen, riot or murder.

I thought of screeching for help and I thought of fainting. Then there was a confusion of thoughts, for the elevator had stopped at the floor. There were several feminine voices.

I peeked around the corner and here they came—three of 'em. I reached out my hand to wave them back and one end of the towel slipped and, of course, I had to retrieve it.

There was an indoor courtyard. I rushed to the window, and outside was a little balcony. With eagerness I hoisted the window and stepped out into the chill wind. I stood there shivering like an aspen leaf and when I saw three ladies pass I waited a moment and started inside.

For some reason I happened to look out over the courtyard. I never knew a hotel could hold so many people, and all of them were crowding to the various windows.

Ah, the House Detective.

When I got back in the hall the house detective was standing there. I knew him by his brown derby. "What's comin' off here?" he thundered.



"I never knew a hotel could hold so many people."

bath tub or so. But bathing there is an ordeal. At a hotel where I was staying, a valet with long

whiskers would come in and say, "Your bath is ready, sir!"

I always wanted to yell "Beaver!" and shoo him out but he looked too serious like. He had the kind of

a little old-fashioned modesty in this changing world.

Stubborn! No End.

I tried to tell him a funny story once and, when I paused for laughter, he reached over and handed me a sponge, the ripping old dodo. He always asked me how I

The Papered Door

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By Mary Roberts Rinehart

pointed. But it came an hour later, when the clock with the painted dial was striking three. The bolt of the unlatched door and the glow of the baseburner through the parlor window had caught their victim.

Cooper had compromised with his conscience by making a careful round of the house. At one place he stopped. In a lull of the wind it seemed to him that there was a curious, grinding sound. Then the gale rose again, caught his hat and sent him running and cursing. When he came back the noise, whatever it was, had ceased.

He stamped cautiously on the low porch and opened the door. A homely odor of tea met him, mixed with a comforting warmth. He turned up the lamp and took off his overcoat. It was his best overcoat and shabby at that. If he had any luck and the storm droye Carter back, he'd be able to buy a new one. He dusted it off with his hands before hanging it over the back of a chair to dry. On one shoulder a few grains of sawdust caught his attention. He looked at them with speculation, but without suspicion. He had a sense of humor.

"Ha!" he said to himself. "Even the sky has gone in for adulteration. Sawdust in the snow!" He smiled at the conceit and sipped the tea. It was not very good, but it was hot. Overhead he could hear the slow rocking of a chair.

"Poor child!" he said. "Poor little girl—all this for that damned bunk!" He affected a further compromise with his sense of duty by getting up every few minutes and inspecting the street or tiptoeing through the kitchen and pulling open unexpectedly the back door. Always on these occasions he had his hand on his revolver pocket.

Three-thirty. The storm had increased in violence. Already small drifts had piled in still corners. The glow of the base-burner was dull red; the rocking overhead had ceased. Cooper yawned and stretched out his legs.

"Poor little girl," he said. "Poor little girl! And all for the sake—all for the sake—" He drew a deep breath and settled lower in the chair. Molly Carter bent down from the top of the stairs and listened. The detective had come in and she had heard him him go out. It could not do to descend too stealthily for fear he were still awake. As an excuse she took down a bot-

tle of the baby's to fill with milk.

Cooper was sound asleep in the parlor, his head dropped forward on his breast. There was a strong odor of drying wool as his overcoat steamed by the fire.

Still holding the bottle, she crept to the kitchen and tapped lightly three times on the papered door. There was no reply. Her heart almost stopped, leaped on again, raced wildly. She repeated the signal. Then, desperately, she put her lips to the wall.

"Jim," she whispered.

There was absolute silence, save for the heavy breathing of the detective in the parlor. Madness seized her. She crept along the tiny passage to the parlor door, and working with infinite caution, in spite of her frenzy, she closed it and locked it from the outside. Then back to the kitchen again, pulse hammering.

The bottle fell off the table and broke with a crash. For a moment she felt as if something in her had given away also. But there came no outcry from the parlor, no heavy weight against the flimsy door.

She got a knife from the table drawer and cut relentlessly through the new paper strips. Then, with the edge of the blade, she worked the door open.

Jim half sat, half lay, in the bottom of the closet with closed eyes. Drink and fatigue had combined with stifling air. He reached in and shook him, but he moved under her hand without opening his eyes. With almost superhuman strength she dragged him out, laid him prone on the kitchen floor, brought snow and rubbed it over his face, slapped his wrists with it to restore his pulse—the village method.

He came to quickly, sat up and stared about him.

"Hush," she said, for fear he would speak. "Can you hear me, Jim? Do you know what I am saying?"

He nodded.

"Cooper is locked in the parlor, asleep. You can get away now. My God, don't close your eyes again. Listen! You can get away."

"Away from what?" he asked stupidly.

"Away from the police. Try to remember, Jim. You shot the clerk from the drug store and—the girl at Heideger's. The police are after you. There's a thousand dollars on your head."

That roused him. He struggled to his feet, reeled, caught the table.

"I remember. Well, I've got to get away. That's all. But I can't

go—feeling like this. Get me—some whisky."

He needed it. She brought it to him, measured out. He grumbled at the quantity, but after he had had it his dull eyes cleared.

She had gone to listen at the parlor door. When she came back, he was looking more himself. He was a handsome fellow with heavy dark hair and dark eyes, a big man as he towered above her in the little kitchen. His face did not indicate his weakness. There are men like that, broken reeds swinging in the wind, that yet manage to convey an impression of strength.

His wife brought the overcoat and held it out for him.

"By Shultz's fence, you said, Jim, and then to the railroad. There's a slow freight goes through on toward morning, and if that doesn't stop, there's the milk train. And—Jim, let me hear about you now and then. Write to Aunt Sarah. Don't write here, and don't think once you get away that you are safe. A thousand dollars reward will set everything in the country looking."

He paused, the overcoat half on. "A thousand dollars," he said slowly. "I see. When I'm gone, Molly, how are you going to make out?"

"I'll manage somehow; only go, Jim, go!"

"I don't know about this going," he said after a moment. "They'll grab me somewhere. Somebody'll get that thousand. You'll manage somehow! What do you mean by 'somehow'? You'll get married again, maybe?"

"Oh, no; not that."

He cared a little then—in spite of the girl at Heideger's!

If he would only go! This thing for which she had schemed the whole night might fail now while he talked.

"You can't stay here," he said slowly. "You can't bring the children up where everybody knows about their father. They can't run any sort of a race with that handicap."

For answer she held out his overcoat. But he shook his head. Perhaps it was his one big moment. Perhaps it was only a reaction from his murderous mood of the afternoon. For now quite suddenly he put his arms around her.

"I am not worth it. Molly," he burst out. "I am not worth a thousand dollars alive or dead, but if they're offering that for me, if you had it you could go out west somewhere and nobody would know about you. You could start the kids fresh. That's about the only

thing I can do for you—give you a chance to get away and forget you ever knew me."

She did not understand at first. When she did she broke into quiet sobbing. She knew his obstinacy; the dogged tenacity of the weak. Now when every second counted to have him refuse to go!

She pleaded with him, went down on her knees, grew hysterical finally, and had to be taken in his arms and quieted, as he had not quieted her in years. And still there was no sound from the parlor.

"They'll get me somehow," he repeated over and over. "And I—I would like to feel that I had done one decent thing first. That red-eyed ferret in the parlor will get the money if you don't. For the children, Molly; they've got a right to ask to be started straight."

That was the argument that moved her finally into a sort of acquiescence. There seemed nothing else for her to do. He even planned the thing for her. He would hide in the barn in the loft. The swift snow would soon fill the footprints, but in case she was anxious, she could get up early and shovel a path where he had stepped.

"Nothing, not even a towel," I said, trying to be merry and bright. "You get back in your room," he commanded. He added, "And I'll call the house physician."

He opened the door with his pass key and let me in. He followed. The manager came in at his heels.

"I suppose," said the house detective, "you are going to tell me you were just out picking daisies,"—which struck me as being the unfunniest remark I ever heard.

Then the house doctor came in with his little satchel. He wanted to know the trouble.

"This guy," said the hated house detective, "thinks this place is a Turkish bath house."

"I don't neither nothing of the kind," I replied in a vicious assault on the Queen's English. And, come to think of it, it wasn't a very snappy retort.

The Cloud of Suspicion.

Well, anyway, when I could make my teeth quit eastangling I explained just what had happened. They tramped out, but all the day every time I went out the house detective was loitering about my door.

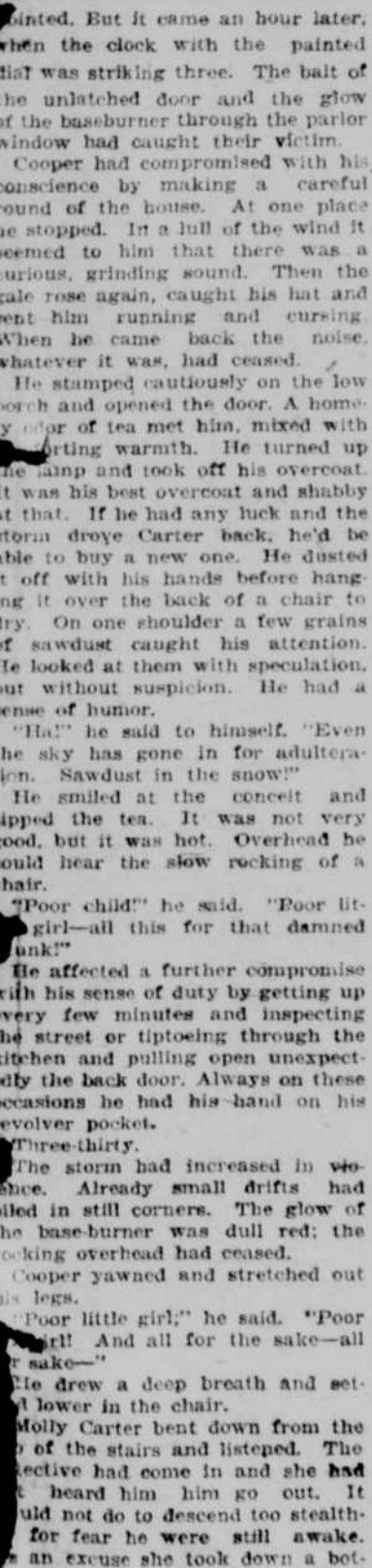
If you don't think that was an adventure—April Fool. I had all the thrills of a melodrama in the mere simple process of taking a bath.

Some people prefer hot baths and others go in for the cold plunge. My vote goes for the tepid. (That English valet has me saying that.)

I believe some of the biggest ideas ever given to the world have come from men while reclining in the luxuriant warmth of the bath.

I don't want to seem a bath zealot and I'm not a propagandist for some plumbing supply house, but I honestly believe everybody should bathe regularly. Indeed, I rather cherish the hope will eventually become universal and that no Saturday will go by without the entire world taking the matutinal or nocturnal dip.

I wish to warn all regular bathers, however, of one of the greatest dangers that beset them. Don't let your curiosity get the better of you when the front bell rings. After all, it may be only a bill collector or a census taker. Let the old bell ring out. Stick to your tub. (Copyright, 1922.)



Pantomime

By J. H. Striebel

A Boy and a String.

