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THE CANTON COMPANY, NEW YORK CITY.

The White Cat

[BY] GELETT BURGESS, AUTHOR OF "VIVETTE."
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We raced madly for the Harbor, sought the Methodist minister there, went into his cool prim front parlor, were introduced to his wife—who had that day enough to gossip about, I'll warrant—and the thing was done in ten minutes. Then we piled happily into the car and pelted home. Joy looked at me with new eyes. "You've done it, haven't you?" "You bet I have!" "How did you manage it? I thought I had refused you?" "I don't understand it myself, it just happened. It had to be."

"You ought to be a highwayman!" "It's partly your fault, you know!" "And I've known you only a month! How reckless! It must have been that incorrigible, irresistible, unexpected, unmissable nick in your chin! I've gone from new moon to full, at a bound! Now I'm a bride-rampant; I could fight my way to you through eight miles of jungle! Was I pretty, Leah?" She turned and held out her hand. "Deed you were, Miss Joy, honey, I never see you 'beat'!"

How she laughed! "And you were the sweetest bridesmaid, too! See her eyes, Chester, please look around! Never mind if we do run into a tree, today. Did you ever see such hidden depths of gold as are beneath her eyes? Isn't that color and outline perfect? There's no wildfire or heroics about Leah, but she's got more brains than both of us put together! And she's got a southern accent now, that you couldn't dissipate with an electric battery. Leah, you're as beautiful as a Jaguar! Can't you go faster, chauffeur, dear? I'd rather eat fly paper than ride in a slow automobile! Say, it's awfully stimulating to get married, isn't it? I'm going to do it all the time, after this."

I leaned over to kiss her, and we nearly ran into the depot wagon on its way from the train. We were followed by two dozen eyes till we were hidden by a turn of the road.

So her brain coiled as we sped along, shrieking with laughter. But Joy's frolic mood subsided as we approached Midmeadows. She looked at me plaintively and said:

"The idea of the White Cat's being married before she's had her head and tail cut off!" "Oh, that'll be done before you know it!" I said. "What I'm thinking is that now Dr. Copin will be allowed at Midmeadows again, if I have to keep him out by force. With him out of the way, we can manage the rest. But no more of that now. It's our wedding day! We ought to have told King to bake a cake!"

We had quieted down enough by supper time to talk the matter over calmly and plan for tomorrow. The time had, queerly enough, more the effect of parting than the beginning of a new and happy life. Joy grew wistful and distraught as the evening wore on. I would not let her talk of "the murder," as she called it, and I tried to keep her mind from returning to the mystery of Edna's presence. Finally she said:

"Chester, I'd like to send her a message. Just think, I've never had any communication with her!"

"It will do no good," I replied. "It will do no harm," she insisted. "I may never have another chance. I'm going to write a note for you to give her, if she comes tomorrow. Will you?"

I said that of course I would, and she sat down at her secretary and, after thinking a few minutes, biting her pen, she wrote this:

Dear Edna: What has brought us together we can never know. But it is terrible to me to think that, being so closely and mysteriously related, we could not have been friends. For all you have done to me and mine, I forgive you, and somewhere and somehow I hope that you will forgive me for everything I have done to you.

and was, as she had said, quite different from Edna's. It was bold and flowing, sharply slanted and graceful, the hand of a fast writer and a quick thinker. I put the note into my pocket to give tomorrow to Edna. I should not pass it back to the same hands that had written it, it would be read by the same eyes that saw it now—but I could guess with what scorn and anger it would be received. Joy bade me good night with a tremor in her voice, gave me a long, clinging kiss, and looked up into my eyes.

"I'm not really your wife yet, you know, Chester," she said. "Come slowly, Edna," I replied. "And I may never be—" The tears filled her eyes. "Do you think I shall fail, after today?" I said. "I still have my revolver, if you do. Remember the White Cat, and your promise!" "That's a sad thought for a wedding night! I'm going to save you!" "Poor Edna!" she said, releasing herself. Then, as if she thought it unwelcome to leave me sorrowful, she flashed a smile at me, waved her hand and ran upstairs.

CHAPTER III.
I have said so much of my "plan" that it is now quite time to explain it, for it was of the simplest. Many of the recorded cases of multiple personality, had arisen, I found, from a shock, sometimes purely physical, sometimes mental. It was my idea that in Miss Fielding's case the process might be reversed—that I might inhibit her secondary self by some violent excitement. A long process of hypnotic treatment might, I knew, effect a cure more or less stable, but the doctor's superior knowledge and, heretofore, his superior advantages, had made me doubt of succeeding in that way. To take her to any competent specialist was inexpedient, for the reason that we should meet with a steady opposition from Edna, who could do much to make such a course impossible.

The means I intended to employ were, I must confess, brutal. I intended to frighten Edna to within an inch of her life—to frighten her, that is, so that she might be afraid to reappear. This explanation is superficial, but it conveys the idea: what really would happen, I thought, was that Joy would "wake up" and resume permanently her normal condition. I was not competent to explain the rationale of it; I trusted, in the way to the mere reversion of the processes that had been described in similar cases of disintegrated personalities.

Exactly how to accomplish this end I was not yet decided, save that I had prepared myself with a pair of revolvers and blank cartridges; I left the actual operation to the inspiration of the moment, taking advantage of the circumstances. I knew that the mental shock must be severe and that the tension should be prolonged almost to the breaking point. In some way or other it would come to threatening her life. In my mind it was like deliberately breaking a badly-set bone that it might heal again aright. So desperate a remedy I had not wanted to describe to Joy, nor did I ever expect to tell her, even should her cure be effected.

Of the cruelty to Edna, I had no thought. I knew no other way of accomplishing what I desired, and my sympathies, naturally, were entirely with Joy. She alone, surely, had a right to exist in that fair body. Seeing that I could not settle the ethical considerations involved, and that they only impaired my will, I cast them aside. I offer no other excuse for my conduct. It seemed expedient, in fact, the only thing that would be effective, in ridding my life of her incubus. If it were wrong, well, I would take the blame. I have never been able to settle the question in my

own mind even yet.

She slept late the next morning. I was downstairs when she rang for Leah, and so heard nothing, but it was no surprise to me when, a few minutes later, Leah came down and said:

"It's Edna."

The fight was on. I was now prepared to undertake (as it would certainly seem to a spectator) to torture my wife of a day half to death. I shall not attempt to describe my own feelings as I anticipated the prospect.

"Has she tried to telephone?" I asked. My voice, I imagine, was now like that of a surgeon at an operation asking his assistant for a knife. "No," said Leah.

"Hurry up, then. You must manage to overhear what she says, if possible. I must know whether the doctor's coming or not. Have you sent Uncle Jordan away?"

"He's harnessing up to go to the Harbor, and he'll be gone all the forenoon."

"Good."

She went into the kitchen and prepared Edna's breakfast, while I crept upstairs and listened to hear in case she telephoned. As soon as Leah went up with the breakfast tray, I went down again and walked into the kitchen.

"King," I said, looking square at the Chinaman, "today I'm going to drive the devil out of Miss Fielding. You sabbee?"

He grinned very good-naturedly. "Yep, I sabbee," he answered, paring his potatoes calmly.

"Maybe I make heap noise. You sabbee?"

"Yep I sabbee!" again.

"You no mind me, King? You not be frightened?"

He laughed and said, "Aw, no! I no care. Maybe I come help. I sabbee debil all light!"

"No, I won't need your help, King. I can do it alone. I think. All I want you stay here and not be frightened."

"Aw, I no frighten. What's a-matter? You no think so?"

"Well, you don't know anything about it. Sabbee? You must keep quiet, sure."

"Oh, I sabbee all light. Maybe somebody ask me, I say, 'I not know! I sabbee. I say, 'you go-to-hell!' he-

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he!" He laughed to himself. "You heap good man, you all light, sure. Dive away debil, that's all. What's a-matter? You no sabbee me? Aw?" He turned away in scorn at my distrust.

I was pretty sure that I could trust to his imperturbability, and returned to the library satisfied, leaving King still chuckling inanely to himself.

In a moment Leah came down again and said hurriedly to me:

"She's just telephoned. She said nothing about yesterday, or that you were here! He must have said he wasn't coming down today, or at least not this morning, for she tried to tease him to come. She's all dressed up—it's astonishing—I can't tell you!" She left me and immediately afterward I heard Edna's footsteps on the stairs.

For what reason she had dressed herself so extravagantly—whether from sheer willful fancy, or a desire to tantalize me or to seduce me from my fondness of Joy—I have never decided. She wore an evening gown of gold tissue, sheer as gossamer, fold on fold, embroidered with gold threads all over the low-necked corsage.

About her forehead was a garland of gold laurel leaves, beautifully modeled and tooled, interlaced with a slender string of coral beads. Her arms were bare. On her right breast was a red velvet rose, she had stockings of scarlet silk and golden slippers. It was a costume for a fancy dress ball and had indeed been originally made for that purpose. To see her appear, now, and shine in the morning sunlight like a butterfly, was to see something as extraordinary as it was picturesque.

She came to me with all Joy's grace and held out her hand, laughing.

"So you're here again after all, Chet," she said. "I thought I'd dress up for you. You've never seen me to advantage. How do you like it?" She turned slowly round for my benefit.

"You're an empress!" I exclaimed. "I don't deserve this honor!"

"She began dancing a minuet all alone, speaking as she swirled."

"Indeed, you don't! I didn't want you here yesterday, really. But now you've come down again, you'd better stay." She curtsied demurely.

"But look out for the doc—let's—let's!" she was off again in a circle. "I suppose it was Joy who invited you! I'll have to entertain Joy's guest, I suppose. There! Now sit down and talk to me."

What was behind her whimsical mood, and why she so willingly received me, I could not guess. When I had taken a seat she tapped me with her fan and said:

"You know, I've always liked you, Chet, but you see the doctor thought it wasn't best for me to have you about. Really, I oughtn't to let you stay now. He'd be perfectly furious you know. He thought you had gone up to town. You must hide, if he comes."

To Be Continued.

BOOKBINDERS ON STRIKE

Want 8-Hour Day—New York, Boston and Other Places Affected.

New York, Oct. 1.—A number of strikes of bookbinders belonging to the Brotherhood of Bookbinders, took place today in several cities for the enforcement of the eight-hour work-day.

The types have been refused the demand in four cities and strikes of the bookbinders, it is stated, will be ordered in all type-plate shops. It is believed that 500 will be affected here, and according to the International, the locking of the bookbinders will be ordered out of sympathy.

About 200 bookbinders and stampers in Boston, Cambridge and Norwood, went on strike today for an eight-hours workday. The movement among the bookbinders for an eight-hour day is national in its extent. The men who struck today in Boston composed a minority of the union binders in that city. Firms employing about 500 union members, having acceded to the demand.

JUMPED OUT OF COFFIN

Chicago, Oct. 1.—A dispatch from Wheeling, W. Va., says: Relatives of Mrs. Frederick Hartell, the young wife of a farmer living near Huntington, were bemoaning her death a few minutes before the minister arrived to conduct the funeral services, when she suddenly sat up and cried and then jumped out of her coffin.

The minister swooned, when a pale-faced woman over whose body he had been called to conduct services, gave such unmistakable signs of life.

The woman, who had been ill, fell into a swoon, which state she remained for four days. Her husband

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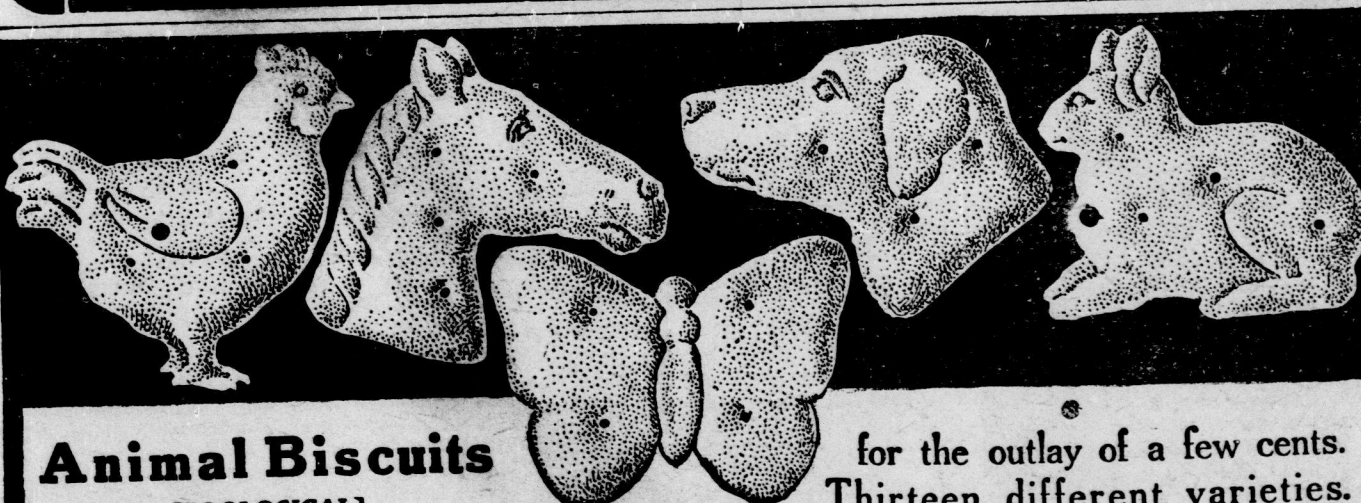
is a most important one for bakers, and one which should be seriously considered by all.

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