

A POWERFUL DRUG.

(No household should be without it.)

All respectable druggists, Montgomery assures me, keep the cio-root. That is the name of the drug, and Montgomery is the man who ought to write its testimonial. This is a testimonial to the efficacy of the cio-root, and I write it the more willingly, because, until the case of Montgomery dropped up, I had no faith in patent medicines. Seeing, however, in, they say, believing; and I have seen what the cio-root did for Montgomery. I can well believe now that it can do anything, from removing grass-spots to making your child cry out in the night.

Montgomery, who was married years ago is subject to headaches, and formerly his only way of treating them was to lie in bed and read a light novel. By the time the novel was finished, so, as a rule, was the headache. This treatment rather interfered with his work, however, and he tried various medicines which were guaranteed to cure rapidly. None of them had the least result, until one day, some two months ago, good fortune made him run against an old friend, Chambers street. Montgomery having a headache, mentioned it, and his friend asked him if he had tried the cio-root. The name even was unfamiliar to Montgomery, but his friend spoke so enthusiastically of it that the headachy man took a note of it. He was told that it had never been known to fail, and the particular merit of it was that it drove the headache away in five minutes. The proper dose to take was half an inch of the root, which was to be sucked and eventually swallowed. Montgomery tried several chemists in vain, for they had not heard of it, but at last he got it on a back street. He had so often carried home in triumph a "certain cure," which was subsequently flung out at the window in disgust, that his wife shook her head at the cio-root, and advised him not to be too hopeful. However, the cio-root surpassed the fondest expectations. It completely cured Montgomery in less than the five minutes. Several times he tried it, and always with the same triumphant result. Having at last got a drug to make an idol of, it is not perhaps to be wondered at that Montgomery was full of gratitude. He kept a three-pound tin of the cio-root on his library table, and the moment he felt a headache coming on he said, "Excuse me for one moment," and bit off half an inch of cio-root.

The headaches never had a chance. It was, therefore, natural, though none the less annoying, that his one topic of conversation should become the properties of this remarkable drug. You would drop in on him, glowing over the prospect of a delightful two hours' wrangle over the crofter question, but he pushed the subject away with a waive of his hand, and begged to introduce to our notice the cio-root. Sitting there smoking, his somewhat dull countenance would suddenly light up as his eyes came to rest on the three-pound tin. He was always advising us to try the cio-root, and when we said we did not have a headache he got sulky. The first thing he asked us when we met was whether we had a headache, and often begged to introduce to our notice the cio-root and gave it us in a piece of paper, so that a headache might not take us unawares. I believe he rather enjoyed waking with a headache, for he knew that it would not have a chance. If his wife had been a jealous woman, she would not have liked the way he talked of the cio-root.

Some of us did try the drug, either to

please him or because we were really curious about it. Whatever the reason, none of us, I think, were prejudiced. We tested it on its merits, and came unanimously to the conclusion that they were negative. The cio-root did us no harm. The taste was what one may imagine to be the taste of the root of any rotten tree dipped in tar, which was subsequently allowed to dry. As we were all of one mind on the subject, we insisted with Montgomery that the cio-root was a fraud. Frequently we had such altercations with him on the subject that we parted in suers, and ultimately we said that it would be best not to goad him too far; so we arranged merely to chaff him about his faith in the root, and never went farther than insisting, in a pleasant way, that he was cured, not by the cio-root, but by his believing in it. Montgomery rejected this theory with indignation, but we stuck to it and never doubted it. Events, nevertheless, will show you that Montgomery was right and that we were wrong.

The triumph of cio-root came as recently as yesterday. Montgomery, his wife, and myself, had arranged to go into town for the day. I called for them in the forenoon and had to wait, as Montgomery had gone along to the office to see if there were any letters. He arrived soon after me, saying that he had a headache, but saying it in a chery way, for he knew that the root was in the next room. He disappeared into the library to nibble half an inch of the cio-root, and shortly afterwards we set off. The headache had been dispelled as usual. In the train he and I had another argument about the one great drug, and he ridiculed my notion about its being faith that drove his headache away. I may hurry over the next two hours, up to the time when we wandered into Buchanan street. There Montgomery met a friend, to whom he introduced me. The gentleman was in a hurry, so we only spoke for a moment, but after he had left us he turned back.

"Montgomery," he said, "do you remember that day I met you in Chambers street?"

"I have good reason for remembering the occasion," said Montgomery, meaning to begin the story of his wonderful cure; but his friend who had to catch a bus, cut him short.

"I told you at that time," he said "about a new drug called the cio-root, which had a great reputation for curing headaches."

"Yes," said Montgomery; "I always wanted to thank you—"

His friend, however, broke in again—

"I have been troubled in my mind since then," he said, "because I was told afterwards that I had made a mistake about the proper dose. If you try the cio-root, don't take half an inch, as I recommended, but quarter of an inch. Don't forget. It is of vital importance."

Then he jumped into his bus, but I called after him, "What would be the effect of half an inch?"

"Certain death!" he shouted back, and was gone. I turned to look at Montgomery and his wife. She let her umbrella fall and he had turned white. "Of course, there is nothing to be alarmed about," I said, in a reassuring way. "Montgomery has taken half an inch scores of times; you say it always cured you."

"Yes, yes," Montgomery answered; but his voice sounded hollow.

Up to this point the snow had kept off, but now it began to fall in a soaking drizzle. If you are superstitious you can take this as an omen. For the rest of the

day, certainly, we had a miserable time of it. I had to do all the talking, and while I laughed and jested, I noticed that Mrs. Montgomery was looking anxiously from time to time at her husband. She was afraid to ask him if he felt unwell, and he kept up, not wanting to alarm her. But he walked like a man who knew that he had come to his last page. At my suggestion we went to a hotel to have dinner. I had dinner, Mrs. Montgomery pretended to have dinner, but Montgomery himself did not even make the pretence. He sat with his elbows on the table and his face buried in his hands. At last he said with a groan that he was feeling very ill. He looked so doleful that his wife began to cry.

Montgomery admitted that he blamed the cio-root for his sufferings. He had taken an overdose of it, he said, tragically, and must abide the consequences. I could have shaken him, for reasoning was quite flung away on him. Of course, I repeated what I had said previously about an overdose having done him no harm before, but he only shook his head sadly. I said that his behavior now proved my contention that he only believed in the cio-root because he was told that it had wonderful properties; otherwise he would have laughed at what his friend had just told him. Undoubtedly, I said, his sufferings to-day were purely imaginary. Montgomery did not have sufficient spirits to argue with me, but he murmured in a die-away voice that he had felt strange symptoms ever since we set out from home. Now, this was as absurd as anything in Euclid, for he had been boasting of the wonderful cure the drug had effected against most of the way. He insisted that he had a splitting headache, and that he was very sick. In the end, as his wife was now in a frenzy, I sent for a doctor. The doctor came, said "yes" and "quite so" to himself, and pronounced Montgomery feverish. That he was feverish by this time, I do not question. He had worked himself into a fever. There was some talk of putting him to bed in the hotel, but he insisted on going home. Though he did not put it so plainly, he gave us to understand that he wanted to die in his own bed.

Never was there a more miserable trio than we in a railway carriage. We got a compartment to ourselves, for though several passengers opened the door to come in, they shrank back as soon as they saw Montgomery's ghastly face. He lay in a corner of the carriage, with his head done up in flannel, procured at the hotel. He had the rugs and my great coat over his legs, but he shivered despite them, and when he spoke at all, except to say that he was feeling worse every minute, it was to talk of men cut off in their prime and widows left destitute. At Mrs. Montgomery's wish, I telegraphed from a station at which the train stopped to the family doctor, asking him to meet us at the house. He did so; indeed, he was on the steps to help Montgomery up them. We took an arm of the invalid apiece, and dragged him into the library.

It was a fortunate thing that we went into the library, for the first thing Montgomery saw on the table was the half inch of cio-root which he thought had killed him. He had forgotten to take it.

In ten minutes he was all right. Just as we were sitting down to supper, we heard a cat squalling outside. Montgomery flung a three-pound tin of the cio-root at it.—From "A Holiday in Bed," by J. M. Barrie.